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Contents



News and views

- 5 Welcome** We've been judging the best new models of the year
- 6 This month** See us on TV
Dealers in England are open again, too
- 7 Next month**
It's a campervan special issue

The best 'vans of 2020

- 8 Campervan**
CMC Hembil Urban
- 12 Budget van conversion**
Elddis Autoquest CV60

- 16 Van conversion (no fixed bed)**
IH 680 CFL
- 20 Van conversion (fixed bed)**
Rapido V62
- 24 Coachbuilt (fixed bed, under £60k)**
McLouis Fusion 360
- 30 Coachbuilt (fixed bed, over £60k)**
Dethleffs Globeline T 6613 EB
- 34 Coachbuilt (no fixed bed, under £60k)**
Auto-Trail Tribute F60
- 38 Coachbuilt (no fixed bed, over £60k)**
Adria Matrix Plus 600 DT
- 42 Family van conversion**
Dreamer Camper Five

- 46 Family coachbuilt**
Benimar Primero 313
- 50 Compact coachbuilt**
Chausson 520
- 54 A-class**
Hymer Exsis-i 580
- 56 Ultimate A-class**
Le Voyageur LV 7.8 LU

Buying

- 60 Finance**
Looking at alternative ways to pay
- 62 Classified advertising** Buy and sell
Motorhomes and accessories

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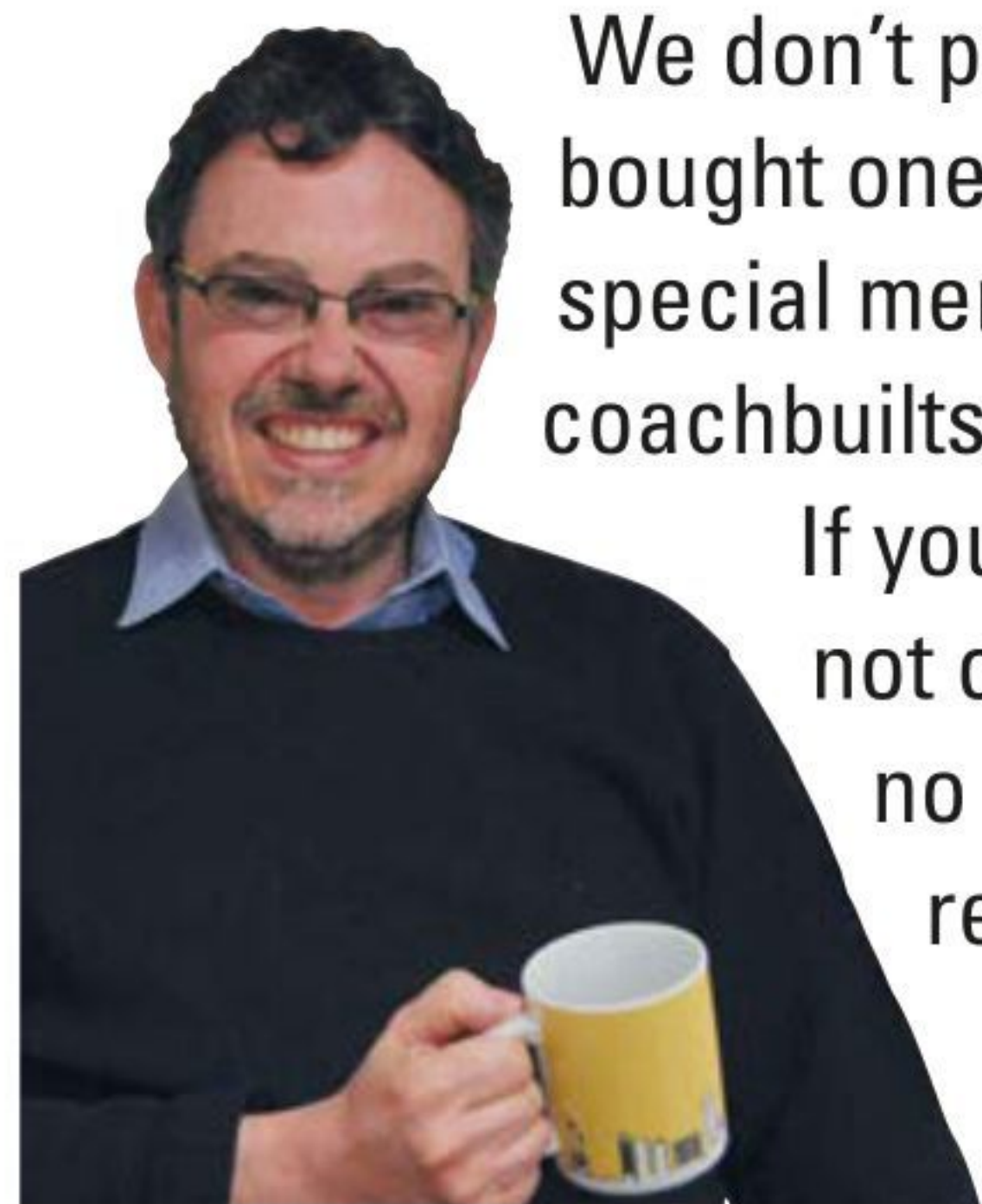
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Motorhome dealerships in England are open again and campsites are expected to follow soon, so now seems like the perfect time to be announcing our top 'vans of 2020. No magazine reviews more 'vans than us, so it's appropriate that we should pick our favourite new models each season. Whether you're looking for a small campevan to use as a daily driver or a sumptuous A-class for an extended tour (when that's possible once again), we think we've found the very best in each of their respective categories.



We don't pick an overall winner as they are such a disparate bunch, but, of course, yours truly actually bought one of them (the CMC HemBil Urban) with his own money. The Dreamer Camper Five deserves a special mention, too, for packing so much family-friendliness into a panel van. The new Auto-Trail Tribute coachbuilds also impressed from the off – and who wouldn't dream of that gorgeous Le Voyageur?

If you're not already reading about these campervans and motorhomes electronically, then why not consider a digital subscription to *What Motorhome*? It'll save you money and, because there's no paper and no postage, it's kinder to the environment. Once you've downloaded it, you can read it anywhere, on your tablet or laptop. Visit motorhome.ma/whipocketmags

PETER VAUGHAN EDITOR

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New Motorhome TV show



An all-new motorhome show, which will air for the first time on 29 June, has been created by the teams behind *What Motorhome* and its sister magazine, *MMM*. The new series of *Motorhome TV* will be shown on Showcase Sky channel 192 on Monday 29 June at 7pm, with a repeat on the following Sunday at 6pm.

There are six programmes in total in this first series and each of the subsequent episodes will be aired at the same time on the following five Mondays. Each show will be repeated at the same time (6pm) on the following Sunday.

This all-new series brings viewers on an exciting and entertaining

journey into the world of motorhomes and sees each programme explore the lifestyle in a fun, informative and unique way.

All six shows will feature something never seen before in this genre of TV programmes – advanced CGI graphics are used in the motorhome reviews to bring to life the vehicles being reviewed by the Editor of *What Motorhome* magazine, Peter Vaughan.

There will also be travel features, accessory reviews with a difference, and campsite challenges in which two teams compete on tasks such as reversing or levelling a motorhome. Finally, each programme will have a special surprise feature.

MOTORHOME AND CAMPERVAN DEALERS REOPEN

The majority of motorhome and campervan dealers in England have now reopened their showrooms for business.

The dealers that are now open have systems in place to ensure the safety of both customers and staff. Many are reporting significant interest from new customers, which ties in with industry predictions that demand for new motorhomes and campervans will rise quickly in the coming weeks. It is expected that thousands of potential new buyers who have traditionally holidayed abroad will now decide that travelling in the UK in a self-contained vehicle like a motorhome or a campervan is more appealing.

The Swift Group revealed its web traffic has increased over 40% during the two weeks to 24 May compared to the two weeks prior, with growth driven by a younger audience aged between 18 and 44 years old. "We are seeing a really promising trend emerging, which, after a hard few months for the industry, is welcome news to UK caravan and motorhome manufacturers," said Nick Page, Group Commercial Director from Swift Group.



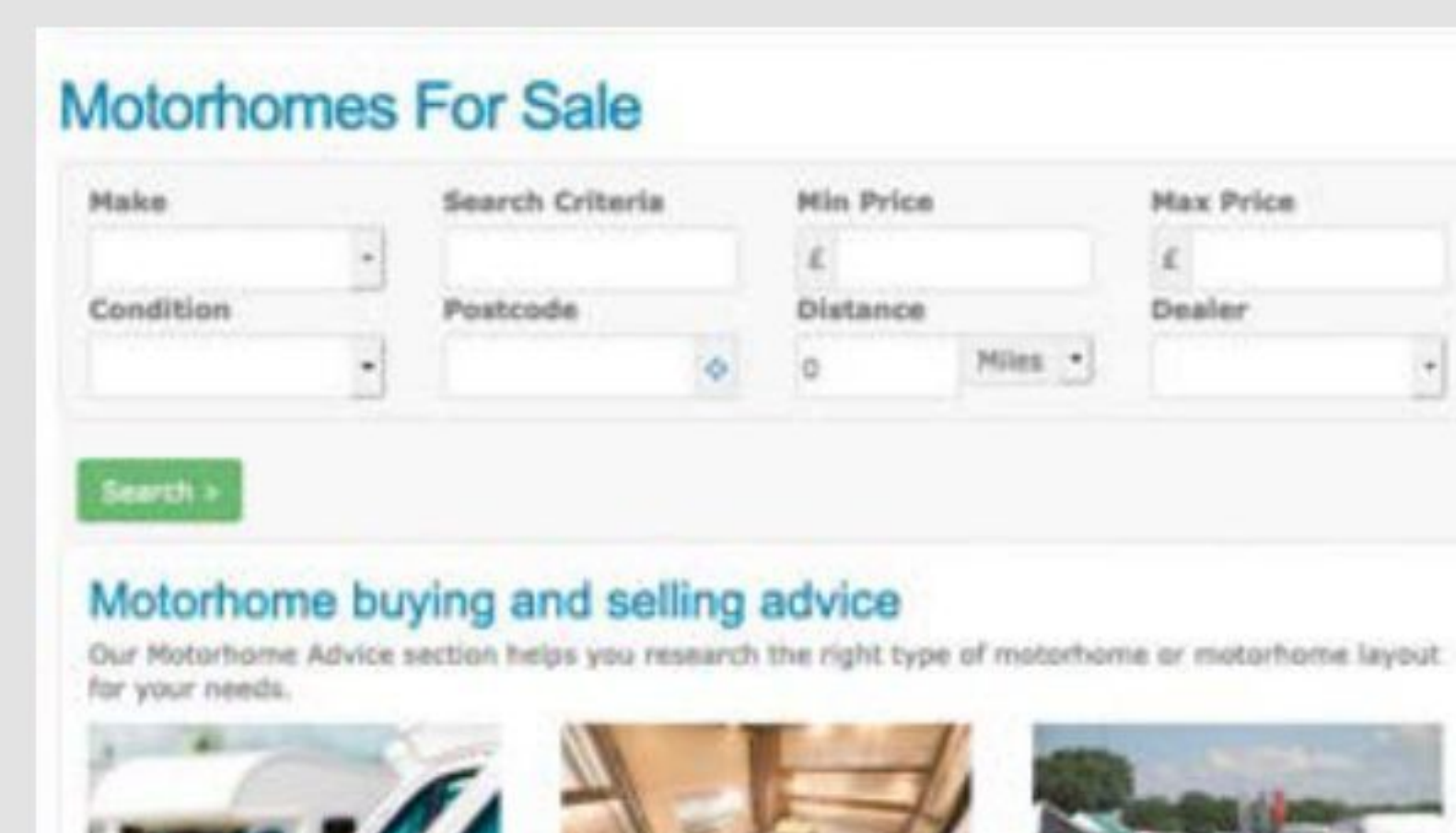
Record numbers buying on Motorhomes for Sale

There has been a record increase in the number of people viewing – and actually buying – the new and used vehicles on the Motorhomes for Sale section of outandaboutlive.co.uk

The website currently has over 3,700 motorhomes and campervans for sale, from both dealers and private sellers. During the week prior to most dealers reopening their showrooms on 1 June, the highest number of motorhomes, campervans and caravans ever were registered as sold.

In just the first three days of the week, over 130 new and used models were bought by buyers keen to beat the anticipated rush. By the end of the week ending 1 June that figure had jumped to 393.

The following week, the record was broken again, with 547 motorhomes, campervans and caravans selling in just seven days.



WILDAX INVESTS MILLIONS IN NEW FACTORY



WildAx Motorhomes, which is part of the French-owned Rapido Group, is to invest millions of pounds in a brand-new, purpose-built production facility at a site that's less than a mile from its current factory in Elland, West Yorkshire.

The British manufacturer, which makes van conversions based on Citroën, Fiat, Mercedes and Renault base vehicles, as well as smaller Ford-based campervans, has already purchased the 16-acre brown field site and has outline planning permission for a new factory. The total investment for the land and building, plus new equipment for the automated production line, will be several million pounds. It is expected that the new 40,000sq ft factory will be operational within 24 months.

"We were very fortunate to have acquired a substantial plot of land less than one mile from our current factories, which will ensure that we are able to retain our highly skilled staff," explained WildAx MD, Duncan Wildman.

Electric campervan is ready for production

German manufacturer, Dethleffs, which manufactures van conversions for Globecar, has confirmed that its plug-in hybrid campervan concept is now ready for series production.



The Globevan e.Hybrid is based on a Ford Transit Custom, which uses only electric power to drive its wheels. The rechargeable battery installed in the vehicle provides an electric-only range of up to 30 miles, then, once that is depleted, a 1-litre EcoBoost petrol engine regenerates the battery.

At the same time, braking or stepping off the accelerator can generate energy for the battery through recuperation.

NEXT ISSUE

AUGUST ISSUE ON SALE 23 JULY

CAMPERVAN SPECIAL

Not just VWs but larger van conversion, too, in this essential reading for all campervan buyers

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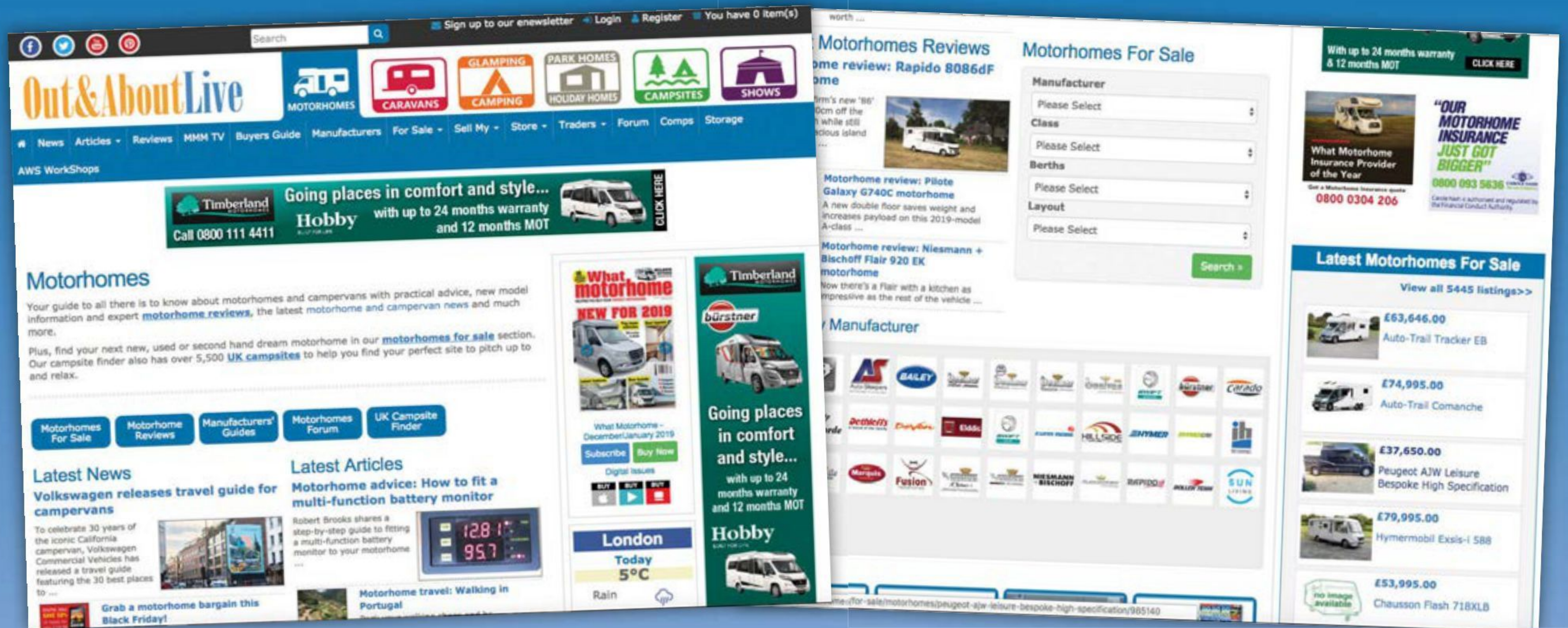


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CMC HemBil Urban

So good that the Editor now owns the demo model...



Of all the various sectors of the campervan and motorhome market, the compact campervan one – especially VW campers – has to be one of the most crowded. And the hardest in which to stand out. There are some very good, long-established players and, not only that, but competition from Volkswagen itself.

Despite that, something struck a chord with me the moment I clapped eyes on the Chestnut Brown demo model of CMC's HemBil Urban as it made its debut under the show lights of the NEC last October. Maybe, it was the removable kitchen pod that grabbed my attention, as this seemed to build on the concept of its Drift sister model's swing-out galley with a simpler (and

better) way of cooking outside.

The Urban impressed further when it came to Warners Towers, not to feature in these pages but in our sister magazine, *Campervan*. Editor, Geneve Brand, came back from a weekend in Norfolk mightily impressed and, knowing that I was looking to change my decade-old T5 California SE for something newer, suggested I take a closer look.

"I can't afford it", I said, before adding "And it's brown!" But she was right, this isn't just another VW camper. For one thing, it's now the new editorial wheels...

Of course, the pedigree helped. CMC has been converting VW vans into campers since 1988

and even its early models (some of which I tested personally) impressed. It's also one of the few converters recognised by Volkswagen and, as the original importer of Reimo conversion components into the UK, it installs these top-quality TÜV-tested parts into its campervans.

CMC's HemBil range is also designed to work primarily as a family-friendly vehicle all week, while also doubling as practical camping accommodation at the weekend. As with a lot of T5/T6 owners, our camper is a daily driver (both on the school run and taking my wife to work), so that's important. That the Urban has one of the widest rear seats on the market – and one of the very few which can genuinely take

**BEST
CAMPERVAN**



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE VW Transporter

PRICE FROM £46,950

BERTHS 2/4

TRAVEL SEATS 5

LENGTH 4.90m

WIDTH 1.90m

HEIGHT 2.01m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,000kg

PAYLOAD 600kg

BUY A HEMBIL FROM...

HemBil campers (the Scandinavian name loosely translates as 'home car') are only available direct from Concept Multi-Car, based in Hythe, Kent, although you will see these campers at both NEC caravan and motorhome shows (February and October) as well as some other exhibitions.



three normal-sized humans (or even three child car seats) – is also big plus.

Another key aspect is that the seat is a fully crash-tested Variotech 3000 unit from Reimo. It slides along tracking that's bonded to the VW floor. Of course, safety is paramount in a family vehicle and this German unit is the best in the market, but it also adds massively to the camper's versatility. Slide right up to where the cooker unit juts out and you have a huge boot area in the back, or slide it back for maximum floor space on site.

Better still, the Variotech seat makes into a bed very simply and quickly – and, as the seat is so much wider than in most other VWs, the bed

is not the usual tight squeeze for two adults more used to a super king size bed at home! At 1.90m by 1.35m, the bed here is generous by camper standards and it's completely flat, too.

At night, curtains with rails top and bottom provide effective blackout and there's a good range of LED lighting, although none of it is dimmable. Curtains around the cab attach neatly with press studs.

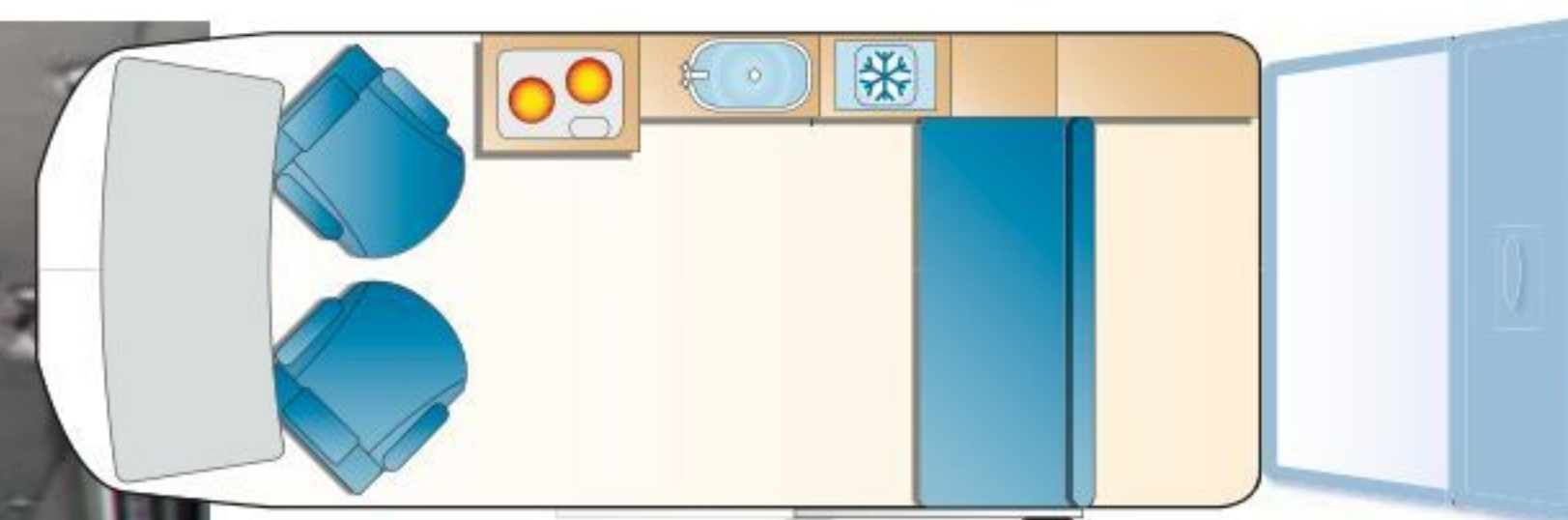
The pop-top roof is another top-quality Reimo fitment and comes with the option of an upper bed. There's plenty of ventilation up top, with a flyscreened panel on either side, plus a window at the front and a directional light. Another option is the Open Sky roof canvas, which can be

completely unzipped for the ultimate in bringing the outdoors in. Perfect for the Côte d'Azur!

When you're enjoying good weather, it's great to cook outside, too, and that's where one of the Urban's neatest features comes in. The section of the galley just behind the driver's seat is a self-contained pod that's bolted to the floor. Just undo the fixings and it lifts straight out – and it's not too heavy for one person to manage. Now you can cook those bacon sarnies without filling the 'van with food smells...

The rest of the kitchen is practical, too, with a surprisingly useful amount of storage considering that this is a very slimline unit (to allow for the wide seat). There's a small sink, served by a pair





WHO IS HEMBIL?

CMC (Concept Multi-Car) first introduced Reimo campervans and the German company's market-leading components (including seats and roofs) to the UK in 1988. The company was formed by Alf and Hilary Shortland, who are still involved, but day-to-day running of the business has now passed to sons, Sam and Toby.



Under Sam's direction, CMC has also developed its own HemBil range alongside proven Reimo designs. These include the Escape (on a choice of Ford, Renault or VW base vehicles), the Drift with its unique hinged kitchen that swings out through a second sliding door, and the new Urban.

Importantly, CMC puts safety as a top priority. It uses the Reimo Variotech 3000 seat system, which has passed European safety tests for seatbelt anchorage, seat strength and Isofix, and Reimo roofs which meet strict German TÜV standards. Its conversions also come with a three-year/36,000-mile warranty.



of inboard 12-litre water containers, while the 20-litre top-loading fridge will hold more than you might think. And more storage can be found in the huge under-seat drawer. With CMC's decades of experience, everything is very well finished, too.

Of course, in a small 'van like this, every detail matters and another novelty is the storage of the table on the inside of the sliding door. Its leg goes in the aforementioned drawer and it attaches to a fixing on the front of the seat base, while you can position it lengthways or across the camper, or even swing it out through the open door as a sort of serving station for al fresco dining.

You might think that all this would come with

a hefty price tag but, actually, the Urban starts at a competitive £46,950 in Smart Line spec with the 108bhp (110PS) engine and five-speed manual gearbox.

Most customers, though, will surely upgrade to the Comfort version, which is priced from £54,950. This model is based on a T30 Kombi Highline version of the Transporter and comes with adaptive cruise control, body-coloured bumpers and mirrors, front foglamps with cornering function, cab carpet, front and rear parking sensors, a Category 1 alarm, Climatic air-conditioning, heated windscreen, privacy glass, automatic headlights and wipers, alloy wheels and more. The Comfort spec also adds

some home comforts such as additional lighting and power points, and Eberspächer diesel-fired blown-air heating.

You can, of course, add plenty more, both from Volkswagen and the CMC options list, to build a camper that's perfect for your tastes. Key features on our example are the beautiful leather trim, the 18in alloys, lowered suspension and the solar panel (so we should hardly ever need a hook-up). It all adds up to a very impressive camper, one good enough to make your Editor (with nearly 40 years' motorhoming experience) put his hand in his pocket. And if it's good enough for me, it's definitely good enough to win this award...

Find Your Space

With an award winning camper by CMC



Urban

The Ultimate Family Utility Vehicle

The new HemBil 'Urban' camper has been designed to be the ultimate family utility vehicle that's as much at home on the city streets as it is winding down the country lanes. The Urban's extra wide rear multi-position, Variotech 3000 seat with 3 x 3-point rear seat belts, allows five people to travel in comfort.

The front cooking module can be easily removed for outside use or when not required to maximise the internal space.

"So good that the Editor bought one..." What Motorhome.

Ingenious Function & Flexibility

Our HemBil 'Drift' camper has been designed to meet the demands of the modern day nomad, the weekend walker and the adventure seeking family.

The ingenious kitchen unit effortlessly swings from inside the vehicle to outside, enabling alfresco cooking and to maximise the space inside the vehicle.

"I want one" Editor - Campervan Magazine.



Test Review - Practical Motorhome.

Drift



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Elddis Autoquest CV60

Last year the CV20 took an award, this time it's the new CV60!



ELDDIS reintroduced van conversions to its line-up in 2019 and, at *What Motorhome*, we were immediately impressed. We awarded the Autoquest CV20 the title 'best van conversion without fixed bed' in its debut year and concluded by describing it as 'probably the best value new motorhome buy of the 2019 season'. At under £40k, the CV20 simply looked like a bargain. Probably the only thing it was lacking was innovation.

For 2020, the price of Elddis' campervans has crept over the £40,000 barrier (only just), but they still look highly competitive, bearing in mind the increased cost of the latest Euro 6d base vehicles. Perhaps more importantly, while

the original Autoquest CV20 and CV40 models played safe with proven and popular floorplans, they've now been joined by the CV60, which has a unique design in the market. There are dozens of rear lounge and rear fixed bed layouts available in long and extra-long Fiat and Peugeot-based panel vans, so to find a major manufacturer breaking out of the mould with new ideas is really to be applauded.

What's more, the CV60 isn't just a unique design, it has the same ultra-keen pricing as its sister models. It starts at £40,234 on-the-road, to which you'll need to add £1,218 for the Lux Pack (cab air-conditioning, passenger airbag and cruise control). You might also want the

automatic gearbox, surely worth the £2,000 extra as this nine-speed unit is so slick, but almost everything else is just tinsel. We could live without the alloy wheels (£650), metallic grey paint (£500) and cab blinds (£450), although we might be tempted by the soporific luxury of a Hypnos pocket sprung mattress as it's only £200 extra. Certainly, most CV60s should stay below a list price of £45k.

For that you get a rear lounge two-berth van conversion – but not one like every other Fiat Ducato camper on the market. And, before we talk about the layout, let's look at the standard spec. It includes a 3,500kg base vehicle with 140bhp engine, where many entry-level rivals

**BEST
BUDGET VAN
CONVERSION**



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Fiat Ducato
PRICE FROM £40,234
BERTHS 2
TRAVEL SEATS 2
LENGTH 5.99m
WIDTH 2.05m
HEIGHT 2.67m
GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg
PAYLOAD 654kg

BUY AN ELDDIS FROM...

Elddis has 45 dealers for its motorhomes around the UK including one in Northern Ireland, as well as a representative in Eire. Many of its larger retailers rebrand the motorhomes under their own special edition model names – including Evolution (Brownhills), Platinum Edition (Perthshire), Vogue (Spinney) and Supreme (Preston).



Elddis also has a substantial network of approved service centres around the UK.



are 3,300kg and 120bhp. Then there's the convenience of a 25-litre underslung gas tank (for cheaper refills and simpler gas top-ups abroad), the VIN Chip theft deterrent, an electric step and a flyscreen at the sliding door (both items that are sometimes omitted to save money) and Grade III insulation. The 2020-spec Elddis van conversions also get a new Whale CompleteHeat 4.3kW gas and electric heating system, which saves space inside the vehicle.

So, what about that rear lounge? Well, forget the standard design of twin parallel side-facing settees and a corridor-like feel. Here, the settee (singular) is on the offside, facing a low, slim cabinet on the nearside. In truth, it's more of a

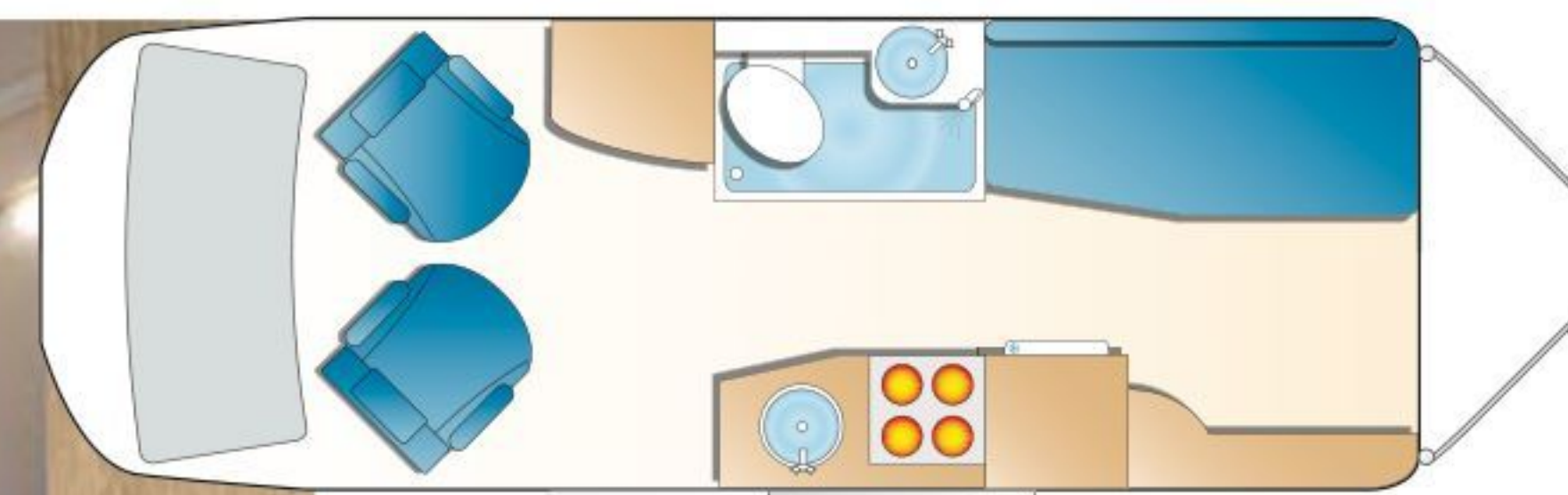
daybed than a sofa, as it's a good deal broader than usual. It comes with scatter cushions, so it's a great place to sprawl, feet-up with a magazine – even better if it's warm enough to have the rear barn doors open. A rooflight is overhead, so there's plenty of natural light, while two LED reading lights and mood lighting above the four roof lockers can add more illumination for the area when needed.

Then, at bedtime, the design of the CV60 really comes into its own. It takes all of about 10 seconds to make the bed. You simply lift the base of the settee and slide it out until the backrest drops down flat behind. It's the next best thing to a fixed bed, but with a bit more versatility.

The mattress measures a fairly generous 1.88m in length with a width of 1.31m at the head end, although it does narrow towards the foot. Importantly, the bed isn't jammed up against a wall, or other furniture. There's still an aisle between the bed and the dresser, and the latter's storage remains accessible while also acting as a useful bedside cabinet. You'll find concertina-style blinds, too, rather than the cheaper sprung cassette roller type.

So, as the rear of this campervan is more about reclining, relaxing and resting, the important business of dining is separate. Meals are served up front where both cab seats rotate easily to face rearwards.





WHO IS EDDIS?



Purchased by the Germans in early 2017, the parent company of Eddis (formerly the Explorer Group) is now Erwin Hymer Group UK. Based in Consett, County Durham, the company has been building mostly budget-priced coachbuilt motorhomes since the mid 1980s, and along the way has swallowed up the Autohomes, Buccaneer and Compass marques – with the last of those being reintroduced in 2019. The Eddis back catalogue includes van conversions and even A-classes, but much of its output today is sold as dealer special editions.

The standard Eddis range comprises three van conversions based on the Fiat Ducato, while the rest of the line-up is all low-profile coachbuilts – Accordo and Autoquest on Peugeot and upmarket Encore on Fiat.



Once swivelled, there's a useful section of worktop adjacent to the driver's chair, so you might not need to extricate the table from the wardrobe if it's just for elevenses, while above the cab there's a handy storage shelf (ideal for bulky items such as your cab silver screens). The rectangular tabletop is the perfect size for a couple of diners and you can keep it set up for an early morning cuppa if your partner likes to lie in undisturbed.

The kitchen, sited in the usual place adjacent to the sliding door, is well kitted out, with a Thetford Triplex cooker complete with three gas burners, a grill and oven, plus electronic ignition. There's a circular sink with loose cover and a

flip-up extension at the forward end of the unit provides further prep' space for the cook. The galley design is shared with the CV40, but Eddis has narrowed the kitchen pod this year to increase the amount of floorspace and room to move about.

Generous kitchen storage is retained, despite this change, with a quartet of drawers in the front of the unit and room for bulkier items of culinary kit in the deep cupboard opposite the kitchen. To the rear of the galley, you'll also find a Thetford 90-litre fridge mounted at a convenient waist height. Compressor fridges like this suit campervans well and are effective in much higher ambient temperatures than

absorption models while also being immune to parking on a slope. Eddis suggests that the standard leisure battery will give you two days' independence from site facilities.

Opposite the kitchen is the washroom, with a 'salad bowl' basin sitting on a curved worktop alongside a Thetford swivel bowl loo with electric flush. No flimsy fold-up washbasin here and you even get a full range of accessories – mug and toothbrush holder, towel hooks and a loo roll holder.

With the superb value retained and a practical one-of-a-kind design, this is a two-berth camper that beats many similarly-priced pre-owned alternatives hands down.



SMC
Motorhomes (Newark)

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 **Our Price
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SAVE £4,000

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Corinium
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 **Our Price
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I 700MEG
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 **Our Price
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IH 680 CFL

The best base vehicle around, combined with a spacious, luxurious layout for two



THIS is a company with close to 30 years of experience in building top-quality van conversions and, while it may be best known for its rear lounge layouts, it is the FL models that have long found favour at *What Motorhome*. Open the usual big sliding side door and a long L-shaped sofa stares back at you, inviting you to put your feet up and gaze back through the opening at the outside world from the comfort of your 'van. It's not a new recipe from this Yorkshire firm, but it does have one fresh ingredient that makes all the difference...

Of course, we're talking about the VW Crafter base vehicle, rather than the ubiquitous Fiat that forms the foundations for the existing 630 FL

model (and much of the IH range). Not only is the Crafter longer (the clue's in the numbering!), resulting in a bit more living space inside, but the VW seems so much more sophisticated than the Fiat when you jump behind the wheel.

Indeed, the driving characteristics of this Crafter-based IH will feel familiar to anyone who's owned a smaller T6 Volkswagen – it's that good. It has the build quality, comfort and ergonomics that set its little brother apart, and yet here is a van conversion with coachbuilt-style spaciousness inside. And, at the same time, it puts just about any coachbuilt to shame in terms of road manners. The extra-long wheelbase here also gives a good ride quality and great stability.

Quite simply, the Crafter is the best base vehicle of its size by some margin. The Mercedes Sprinter might grab your attention with its tech – especially the MBUX multimedia display – but the VW has more driver appeal. It impresses from the get-go with cab seats that cosset, thanks to tilting squabs, lots of height variation (you can get down nice and low for a much less Bob the Builder feel) and even electric lumbar support adjustment. All the controls appear clear and easy to use, too, in typical VW fashion.

IH uses the better-equipped Trendline spec van, which comes as standard with Composition Media with an 8in touchscreen display, cruise control, multi-function steering wheel and



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE VW Crafter
PRICE FROM £72,895
BERTHS 2
TRAVEL SEATS 2
LENGTH 6.84m
WIDTH 2.04m
HEIGHT 2.73m
GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg
PAYLOAD 274kg

BUY AN IH FROM...

The IH factory at Knottingley, West Yorkshire (close to the A1/M62 junction) has always been the primary place to see IH motorhomes, although the company is also a regular at all the key indoor and outdoor leisure vehicle shows. At IH's premises, you'll see a selection of both new and used IH models, some in a small indoor showroom.

Now, for the 2020 season, you can also find IH 'vans in the south, at Harbour Creek Motorhomes on Hayling Island.



electric/heated mirrors, as well as Front Assist, Crosswind Assist, City Emergency Braking, and a driver alert system. A 138bhp (140PS) engine is standard (and perfectly adequate), while a 175bhp (177PS) option gives effortless acceleration, thanks to a massive 410Nm torque figure, delivered from just 1,500 revs. Both units are available with a slick six-speed manual or a sensibly priced (£1,500) eight-speed automatic.

Being one of the newest vehicles in its class, the Crafter also comes with a raft of techy options, including lots of safety and driver assistance kit. Adaptive cruise control, LED headlights, High Beam Assist, Lane Keeping Assist, Park Assist, Trailer Assist and Coffee

Maker Assist are available – OK, we made the last one up, but a heated steering wheel is a very posh alternative to driving gloves.

On the outside, IH doesn't just add windows and graphics, it also replaces the rear doors with its signature GRP rear panel. This incorporates a single double-glazed window, with an opening boot section below. It's an improvement aesthetically (especially as it retains the original VW styling details) and adds practicality, too. The storage compartment here is the full width of the 'van and over a metre deep on the nearside, with an internal height of 820mm – plenty of room for all your outdoor gear.

Another plus of a specialist van converter like

IH is that not only can you choose the exterior body colour but the interior can also be designed to suit your taste, with different fabrics, leathers, wood or grey furniture finishes and bold or classical colour schemes. What won't change is the CFL's layout – or the feeling of space inside, with that long settee and matching XL-sized scatter cushions. There's a free-standing table for dining here (or for use outside), Kenwood speakers in the ceiling and a Heki sunroof as well as large side windows to flood the interior with natural light. Of course, the front seats swivel to add to the lounging possibilities and full headroom in the cab makes for a stoop-free walk-through as another plus.



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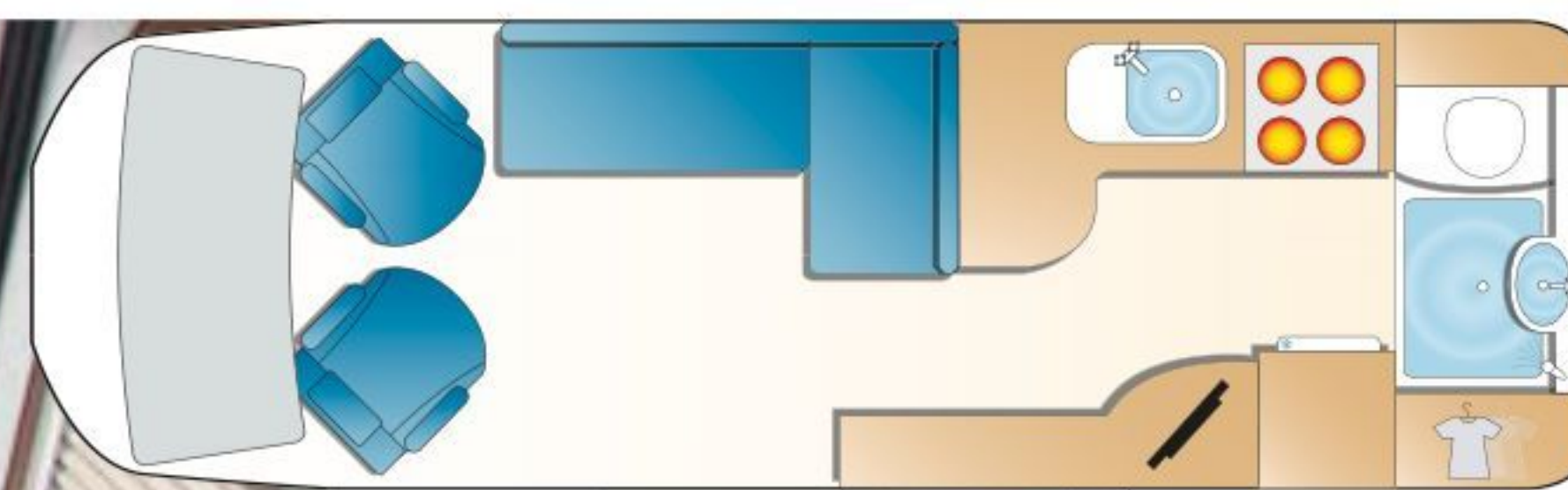


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Best van conversion without a fixed bed



WHO IS IH?

Founded in 1992, IH Motorhomes takes its name from the initials of the company founder, Ian Hartley, who remains at the helm to this day. It has manufactured coachbuilds in the past, but has always majored on upmarket van conversions, primarily based on Fiat, although Mercedes, Renaults and VWs have been converted, too.



A moulded rear panel, replacing the standard van back doors and incorporating a large rear window with an opening boot below, has been a trademark feature since 2003 while, a decade later, the N-Class added a further innovation – a coachbuilt motorhome-style entrance in place of the usual sliding door. N-Class models are now available on both Fiat Ducato and Volkswagen Crafter.



The lounge also converts into your bedroom in seconds. Simply pull out the slatted seat/bed base and drop the backrest cushion (plus an infill) in behind. Then, just remove the curvy cushion that forms the end of the settee and *voila!* Now, you have a 1.88m by 1.26m double bed, with the TV perfectly positioned for those late night flicks (the screen neatly pops up from under the nearside kitchen counter). Bedding stores conveniently beneath the settee.

Nor does the appeal of the 680 CFL wane as you head towards the rear of the layout, where both the kitchen and bathroom are top notch, especially for a van conversion. The galley is L-shaped, with a curvaceous counter at the end

for serving up and plenty of worktop (more opposite) for preparing meals. Equipment includes a combined oven/grill and a stainless-steel sink with a proper draining board, but it's the storage capacity that really gets us thumbing through the Road Tester's Book of Superlatives. Just remember to order the AES fridge upgrade to complete the spec.

Behind the galley, double doors, which hint at John Wayne in a Western bar scene, swing back to reveal a generous washroom. Lots of white gloss furniture, an opening window and a rooflight make for a light, bright space here.

It serves as a changing room, too, as the wardrobe is located on the nearside, while large

cupboards ensure that you won't run out of toiletries even if you tour until the end of time. There's a wide counter around the raised basin, too, so you can spread out all those perfumed pongs and potions.

Unlike many van conversions, there's plenty of leg and shoulder room around the cassette toilet and, even though a curtain is essential for showering, there's so much space in this IH washroom that you shouldn't get wrapped up in it. You certainly won't be pining for campsite ablutions when you're camping off grid.

The new 680 CFL is probably the best motorhome yet from IH, aided and abetted by the class-leading Crafter.



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Rapido V62

This van conversion feels like a low-profile but retains the slimmer, all-steel body of a panel van



THE founder Editor of our sister magazine, *MMM*, the late John Hunt, once told me that his perfect motorhome would be the size of a small car, but his wife's ideal 'van would be as big as a coach. I guess that's the quandary we all struggle with – finding a vehicle that offers all the comforts of home in as small and manageable a package as possible.

The desire to drive something that doesn't feel as if it needs an HGV licence is best exhibited by the rapid growth of the van conversion sector. Campervans are narrower than almost all coachbuilds, so fit better on country lanes and in towns. They are the same width from front to rear and usually have better visibility out, too, so

they're easier for first-time buyers to adapt to. And their all-steel automotive build gives greater reassurance should you be unfortunate enough to be involved in an accident.

But – and it's a BIG 'but' – all the aspects of living onboard have to be squeezed into a very finite space and one that lacks the simple voluminous box of a coachbuilt. That hasn't stopped designers, however, trying to get every feature from their low-profile motorhomes into the confines of a panel van. Rapido's V62 probably comes the nearest yet to combining the best of both worlds. Even so, this is not a seven-metre Mercedes Sprinter but the oft-converted Fiat Ducato, in 6.36m extra-long form.

Buyers don't want to compromise, even when downsizing, so the V62 has everything you'd expect in a modern low-profile coachbuilt. Overcab sunroof – check. Fixed double bed – check. Big fridge/freezer – check. There's even a pretty generous 100-litre fresh water tank, too.

The layout will be familiar to those used to driving something bulkier. Of course, the slimmer body of a panel van won't allow for an island bed, but the classical French bed here makes good use of space by allowing the washroom to nestle in alongside. The bed is mounted quite high off the floor, both to maximise the mattress' measurements and to increase storage below, but a pull-out step aids

**BEST
FIXED BED VAN
CONVERSION**



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Fiat Ducato

PRICE FROM £52,375

BERTHS 2/3

TRAVEL SEATS 4

LENGTH 6.36m

WIDTH 2.05m

HEIGHT 2.59m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg

PAYLOAD 419kg

BUY A RAPIDO FROM...

In Ireland, Rapido has dealers north and south of the border – Thompson Leisure in County Down and Cara Motorhomes in County Limerick.

In England, there are five outlets representing the brand – Spinney (Knutsford) and Brownhills (Newark) look after the Midlands and north, while Simpsons is in East Anglia. Highbridge covers the southwest and the company's original dealer, Wokingham Motorhomes, is in Berkshire.



access. It even comes with a reclining head section, so the bedroom becomes a more useful relaxation area during the day. There are two reading lamps, a rear speaker, twin USBs and an opening window here, too.

Underneath, the rear boot area is 1.06m deep and up to 1.20m wide, with a load height of 0.78m – much more with the headboard raised. And, with the rear barn doors open for access, it's a more accessible and versatile space than you'd get in most coachbuilds.

Another big plus is the super-sized sliding door, which really lets the outside become one with your accommodation on a summer's day. Not only that, of course, but Rapido was one of

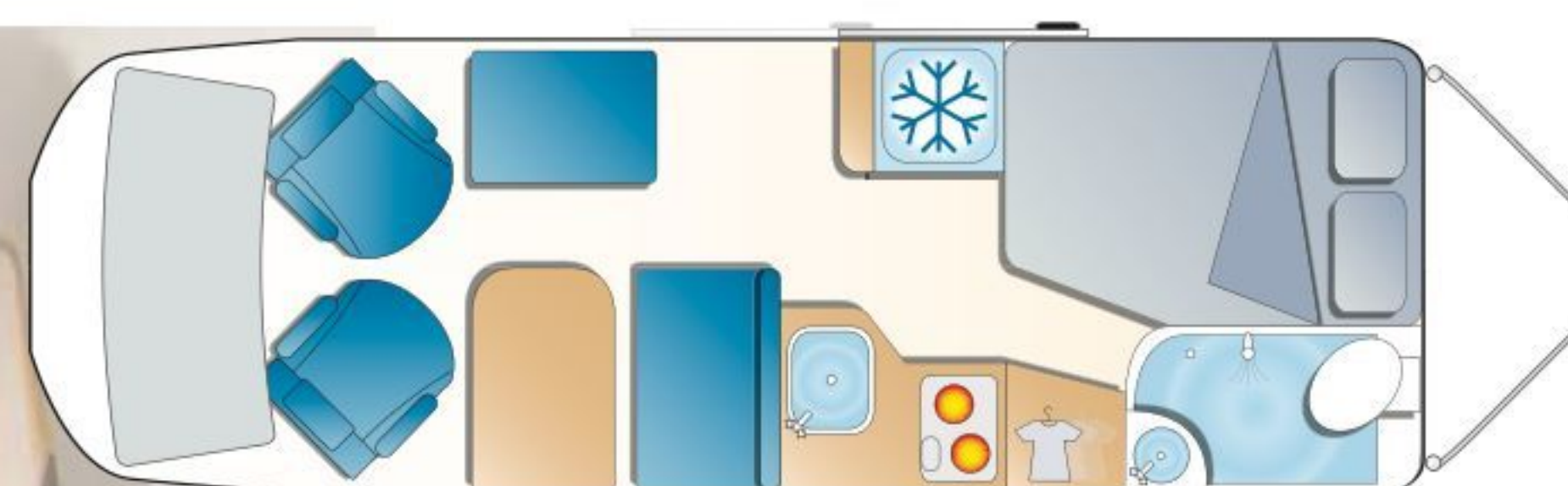
the innovators that introduced a panoramic Skyview sunroof into the cab, not only increasing the amount of natural light here but giving fabulous vision for rear passengers and allowing full standing room right through the vehicle.

The lounge, of course, includes the cab seats, while the half-dinette bench not only features car-like shaping for better comfort, and automotive headrests, but also an extendable squab cushion for greater under-knee support. Unusually for a van conversion, there's also a side-facing seat and, although it's backless, you can just add scatter cushions when the door is closed. It's a spacious seating area for four or five, with a second sunroof over the centre featuring

four spotlights in its surround, and there are touch-operated reading lamps in the cab.

Behind the half-dinette, the galley is another area that takes its design inspiration from larger motorhomes. Its L-shaped format includes six soft-close drawers, all with central locking – deleting one of those on UK models means you can have an oven/grill mounted at a convenient level instead. The latest gas-on-glass hob combines the modern looks of an induction cooker with the convenience of propane, while a solid hinged cover means there's enough worktop. A spice rack and storage slots recessed into the wall ensure that not an inch of space is wasted, while a rubbish bin is also built-in.





WHO IS RAPIDO?

Founded as a maker of folding caravans in 1961, Rapido's first motorhome was launched in 1983. Since then, the company has expanded to become a wider group of leisure vehicle makers, including Fleurette (from 2005), Itineo (2006), Campérêve (2009), Westfalia (2010), Dreamer (2014), PLA and GiottiLine (2016) and WildAx and Stylevan in 2017. However, despite such huge expansion, this remains a family business, with the third generation of the Rousseau clan, Nicolas, joining his father in the business in 2014.



The home of Rapido remains Mayenne in northern France, where Itineo, Dreamer and Rapido models are built.



Opposite, there's another nice surprise. No modest under-counter fridge but, instead, one of the tall/slim coolers with 135-litre capacity. It's an automatic energy selection version, too, and has more cupboard space above, as well as a pull-out rack for tinned foods alongside.

Next to the galley, even the wardrobe is a good size and incorporates shelves as well as a hanging space, plus a drawer for shoes. There's plenty of floorspace, too, around the foot of the bed for getting changed.

Finally, the washroom can't achieve miracles – there's no separate shower – but it has everything you could reasonably expect. A tambour door provides convenient access and

the room is lined with practical GRP mouldings. The swivel cassette loo is serviced via the rear doors and the new-look basin is a huge improvement on rivals' flimsy tip-up units. Even the shower curtain has clips to hold it in place, so that it doesn't entangle you.

Of course, all this comes with Rapido's typical upmarket feel, including a choice of Castello or Elegance styles for the furniture. Everyone will opt for the Rapido Van Pack, of course, as it includes a passenger airbag, cruise control, ESC with ASR and Roll Over Mitigation and hill holder, cab air-conditioning, height-adjustable Comfort cab seats, a colour-coded front bumper, Duo Control automatic gas changeover system

and a Pioneer radio with Bluetooth. Right-hand drive versions also get living area carpets, a flyscreen for the sliding door, silver metallic exterior colouring, Traction Plus with Hill Descent Control, and a leather steering wheel with remote radio controls as standard, as well as the aforementioned gas oven.

The Control Pack and Safety Pack can add further base vehicle kit, while engine upgrades (from the standard 140bhp) and features such as diesel (in place of gas/electric) heating and a second leisure battery can also be added as options. What it all adds up to, though, is a motorhome that, for many, makes it easier than ever to choose a van conversion over a coachbuilt.

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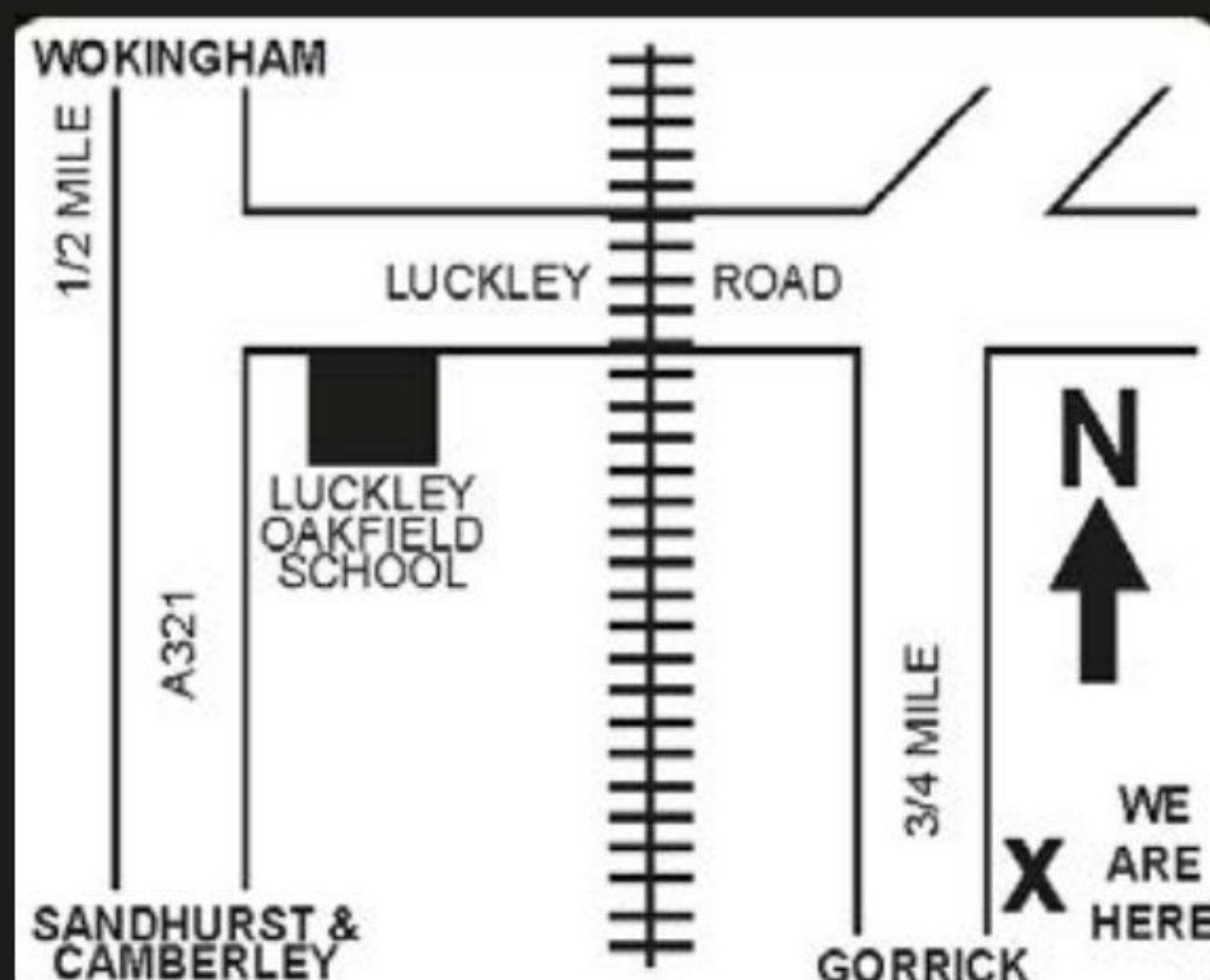


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Vehicle Type: Van Conversion
Transmission: Manual
Engine Size (L): 2.3 Euro 6D-temp
BHP: 140
Gross Weight: (Kg): 3500
Layout: Fixed Side Bed
Body Length: (M): 6.36
Body width: (M): 2.05
Berths: 2+1
Seatbelts: 4
Drive Side: RHD
Price includes:
• 140 BHP EURO 6d-temp engine
• 16" alloy wheel upgrade
• Front fog lights
• TRUMA Combi 6 EH (instead of Combi 4) with CPPlus and iNet

- Rear view camera with radio and double-DIN-screen
- Insulated waste tank
- Skyview
- VAN pack includes: Passenger airbag – Cruise control with limiter - ECS with ASR (traction control), ROM (roll over mitigation), and hill start assistance – manual cab air conditioning - Height adjustable Comfort cab seats with swivel base and 2 arm rests – front bumper painted in bodywork colour – Duo control automatic gas inverter).
- RHD VAN pack includes (Carpet kit for living area – Oven (model; see technical catalogue) - Flyscreen – Metallic paint aluminium grey - Traction+ - Leather steering wheel and gear knob - Radio command on steering wheel - Chromed instruments - Black Piano dashboard)

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McLouie Fusion 360

With a big garage, great spec and strong build quality, this Italian brand deserves to re-establish



THE McLouie Fusion range might not be as well known as some of its rivals but perhaps it should be. Not only does it come from the Trigano Group (which also includes names such as Auto-Sleepers, Auto-Trail, Benimar and Chausson), but its importation to these shores is handled by that stalwart of the British industry, Auto-Sleepers, and the vehicles have a generous UK-friendly spec, as well as a fully 'UK-handed' body with the habitation door on our nearside.

Its line-up is not the bewildering plethora of models offered by some of its more established opposition, as just five models cover most of the fixed bed bases. Here, we've sidestepped the

obvious island bed models and plumped instead for the modestly sized (sub-7m) Fusion 360 with its extra-large garage and extra-long double bed. It may not be the most fashionable layout but it certainly has its pluses.

The first of those winning features is the garage, which comes with large loading doors on either side, plus heating, lighting, four corner-mounted lashing points and a small hatch into the living area (useful when it's raining or if you have dog cages in the garage). Internal width at floor level is 1.09m and headroom is excellent, at 1.20m, so there's plenty of room for a couple of e-bikes. However, if you want to carry a more potent two-wheeler, there's also an unusually

generous 300kg weight limit for this garage – double what many rivals can offer. That might also encourage you to go for the no-cost upgrade to a 3,650kg gross weight, if your licence allows, thus upping total payload to a useful 593kg.

The exterior looks of the McLouie are from the standard European Motorhome Design Rulebook, but the key feature, of course, is the UK-side habitation door, which forgoes the need for any external step, thanks to the lower Fiat Camper chassis. More brownie points are scored for the big overcab Sky Dome window, the alloy wheels and the flush-fit habitation windows, which you might not expect at this price level. The beauty is more than skin deep, too, as the

**BEST
FIXED BED
COACHBUILT
(UNDER
£60K)**

itself in the UK



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Fiat Ducato

PRICE FROM £55,095

BERTHS 4

TRAVEL SEATS 5

LENGTH 6.99m

WIDTH 2.33m

HEIGHT 2.95m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg/3,650kg

PAYLOAD 443kg/593kg

BUY A MCLouis FROM...

The Scottish dealer for McLouis is BC Motorhomes in Ayr, while, in England, the northernmost outlet is Marquis Lancashire. Generally, though, McLouis are sold through independent dealerships, so Go European in Staffordshire, Nick Whale in Evesham and Moran Motorhomes in Shropshire look after the Midlands, with Simpsons covering East Anglia, The Motorhome Showroom (in Wiltshire) representing the southwest and Choose Leisure completing the network down in the far southeast corner.



Italian 'van boasts a glass-fibre finish underneath and on the roof (which you can walk on). Body construction is referred to as WPS, the key strengths of which are a 70mm floor, polyester inner walls and a complete absence of wood.

Another plus is the spec which, on 2020 models, now includes the (previously extra cost) Lux Pack as standard. That adds a high-level DAB radio with sat-nav, a reversing camera that's also linked to the radio display, a 95Ah leisure battery, cab blinds, a 120W solar panel and removable carpets for the living area. So, the options list is commendably short and you'll not be left pondering whether to tick that box or this one for extra kit. You can, however, have the new

Fiat nine-speed automatic gearbox (priced at £2,000) and, if you want to maximise your load carrying potential, there's a Heavy chassis option with 4,400kg maximum gross weight (also priced at two grand extra). It's the 140bhp Euro 6d motor that comes as standard, while the potent 160bhp unit (with 380Nm torque output) is £1,000 more.

The ubiquitous Ducato cab may be lacking a bit of bling (bar the cream leather-look seats) but it's not short of spec. As well as the aforementioned Lux Pack items, cab air-con, cruise control, a passenger airbag, Traction Plus and hill descent control are all standard, as well as steering wheel-mounted switches for the stereo. Another

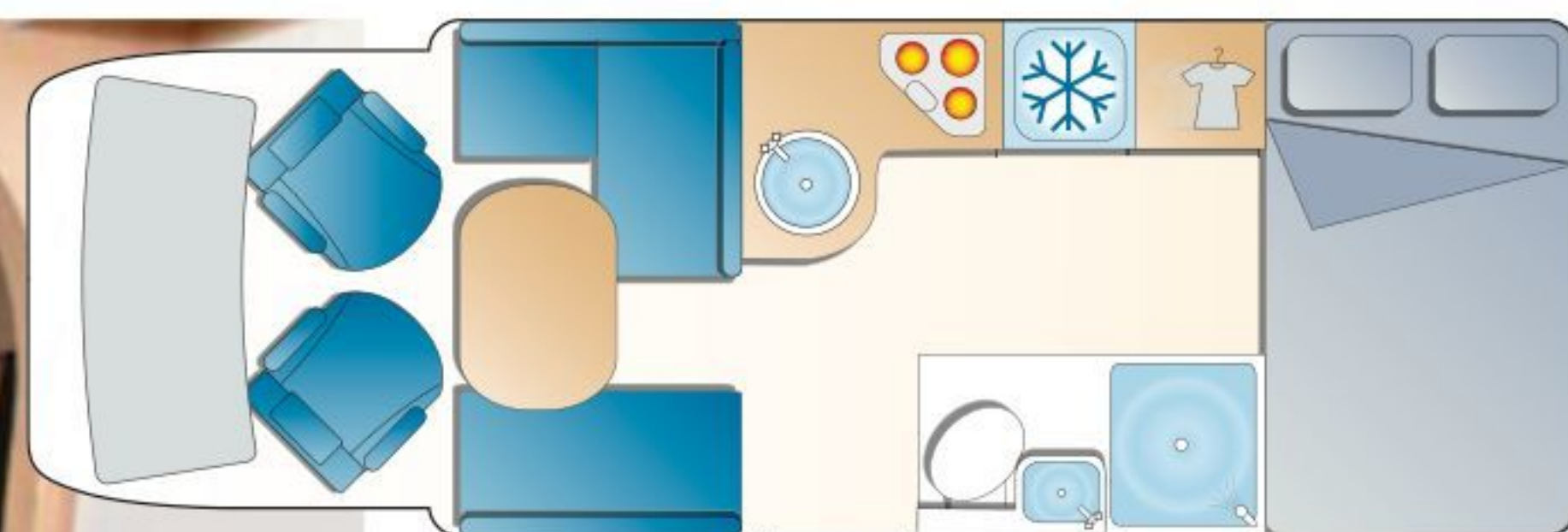
important feature is the central locking, which includes the habitation door, not just the cab.

The lounge is typical of a continental 7m-motorhome, with room for five or six around the fixed table, which is a good size for family dining and rotates/slides in every possible direction, with just a single handle to operate it easily. There's good natural light from the overcab sunroof and artificial lighting from an unrivalled selection of LED strips and spots. For travel, the L-settee includes two three-point belts, while the nearside settee converts into an extra occasional rear-facing pew with a lap belt.

Net curtains add a bit of continental flavour, while the Sky Dome rooflight is one of the



Best fixed bed coachbuilt (under £60k)



WHO IS MCLouis?

The McLouis brand first arrived in the UK almost two decades ago via Don



Amott, a dealer that then specialised in Italian imports. It soon became part of the SEA Group, which also encompassed Elnagh and Mobilvetta, creating the third largest motorhome manufacturing group in Europe at that time. The whole of SEA was swallowed up by the Trigano Group, however, in 2013, so it's now a sister brand to Auto-Sleepers, which began acting as its UK importer in 2019.

McLouis originally focused on entry-level motorhomes but its Fusion range for the UK is more mid-market. While it also offers van conversions, overcab coachbuilds and A-classes in its home market, only low-profiles come here.

Like most Italian motorhome manufacturers, it is based in Tuscany.



biggest of its type and the overcab has cupboards at either side (where others fit open pockets that rival chocolate fireguards on the practicality scale). But what really impresses as you start to examine the Fusion more thoroughly is the solid build, with a sense of no-nonsense durability that is lacking in some blingier rivals.

The kitchen is, perhaps, where the sturdier quality shines through most clearly and the appeal here goes beyond the Thetford Duplex oven/grill and the tall, slim 142-litre fridge with automatic energy selection. There's a touch more worktop than you'll find in some rivals and the twin (high and low) pull-out pantry units found between the fridge and the cooker are perfect for

bottles, tins and packet foods. The spec here even includes an extractor over the hob.

It is hard to fault the design of the bathroom, too. Headroom is generous (1.93m) and the toilet area has an opening window, plenty of room to use the swivel cassette toilet and decent amounts of worktop and storage space. Alongside, there's a proper separate shower with twin drain holes and the usability of this well-proportioned space is increased by the step that's perfect for feet-washing, or even to act as a seat.

Then, finally, there's the rear bed, running the full width of the 'van. Mattress length is a whopping 2.20m (headroom in the kitchen area also suits the super-tall, at 2.08m). The one-piece

mattress offers excellent comfort and two built-in steps aid access.

As a four-berth, the Fusion 360 also comes with a drop-down bed up front (another feature that's an extra cost item on some rivals). It's electrically operated and, unlike many of its ilk, it doesn't interfere with the kitchen or access through the habitation door and there's no need to move any cushions (or even clear the table) before you deploy it. The mattress here is also as thick and comfy as the one at the rear.

So, the Fusion might not be the most obvious choice, but its great standard spec, durable quality and UK-friendly design should put it top of your must-see list.

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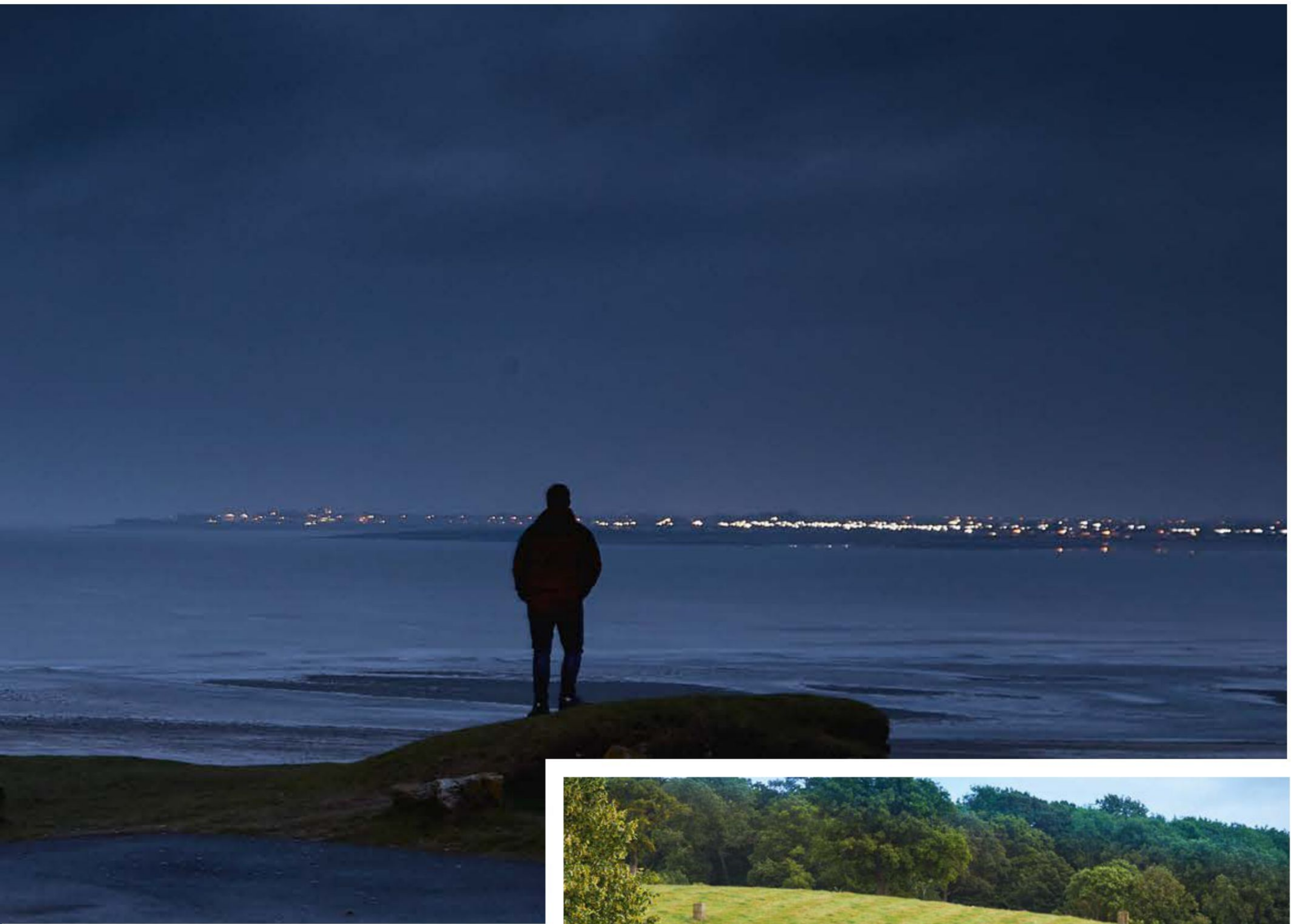
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Dethleffs Globeline T 6613 EB

Truly a star performer, thanks to the rear-wheel Mercedes chassis employed here



YOU don't have to spend £100k to get a top-quality motorhome based on the latest Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis. Nor do you have to drive a vast, coach-like A-class to get the revered three-pointed star on the grille of your new 'van. Dethleffs' new-this-season Globeline is both just over £70k and just under 7m in length – as well as being available on a 3.5-tonne chassis to suit every driving licence holder. That puts it in direct competition with a whole rally field's worth of Fiat Ducato-based rivals. And, as we all know, the ubiquitous Italian is getting rather long in the tooth...

In the latest Sprinter it's clear from the moment you get behind the wheel that this is not

your average light commercial vehicle. The leather steering wheel with cruise control, radio and Bluetooth switches, along with digital air-conditioning can be taken as read. Then there are the Aguti captain's chairs with tilt/height-adjustment, as well as reach/rake variation on the steering column. Where the latest Sprinter really excels, though, is in the tech on offer.

That starts with the fact that all UK-market Globelines get Mercedes' 10.25in MBUX multimedia display. It includes sat-nav and the reversing camera's screen and the graphics here are as pin-sharp as you'd expect in a new E-class.

Keyless starting and Crosswind Assist are further standard features, while the optional

Mercedes Assistance Package adds the 7G-Tronic automatic gearbox, Distronic adaptive cruise control, Attention Assist, Lane Keeping Assist, automatic wipers and High Beam Assist. Now that's the sort of spec you'd expect of a new Merc.

But it's not just about having all the latest toys. Rear-wheel drive is a rarity at this size/price point, but it has advantages in terms of traction (especially when towing or with a fully laden garage). On the road, the 143bhp engine will be adequate for most, but there are 163bhp and 190bhp options. The slick automatic gearbox has long been an impressive feature of Mercedes-based motorhomes and its shifts may be heard (via a variation in engine note) but are rarely felt.



FACT FILE	
BASE VEHICLE	Mercedes Sprinter (RWD)
PRICE FROM	£71,255
BERTHS	3/4
TRAVEL SEATS	4
LENGTH	6.96m
WIDTH	2.33m
HEIGHT	3.00m
GROSS WEIGHT	3,499kg (4,100kg option)
PAYLOAD	446kg

BUY A DETHLEFFS FROM...

Dethleffs has eight dealers in England, plus one each in Wales and Scotland. North of the border, the brand is represented by BC Motorhomes in Ayr, while its Welsh outlet is 3 A's Leisure in Dyfed.

The German marque's English dealers are: Elite Motorhomes (Banbury), JC Leisure (Rye, East Sussex), Lowdhams (Huddersfield and Nottingham), Premier Motorhomes & Leisure (Chichester), Pullingers Leisure Vehicles (Halstead, Essex), Southwest Motorhomes (Ilminster, Somerset) and Travelworld (Stafford).



This new generation Sprinter seems tauter than before, retaining a comfortable ride but without the previous lean and wallow. It's a smooth, refined drive that you can enjoy all the more because it's matched by an impressive lack of creaks, groans or rattles from the Dethleffs living area.

Of course, the Isny-based maker isn't the only one building on the latest Benz base. So, with an increasing number of rivals using this chassis, the Globeline has to live up to its luxury price point. It does that with two aspects that we've come to expect from the brand that tags itself 'A friend of the family' – solid German build quality and a real sense of contemporary design.

The good looks begin with the Style Package option, comprising a metallic black cab, chrome grille, colour-coded bumper, flush-fitting habitation windows and a coachbuilt body with silver metallic finish. Then there's the extra-wide habitation door (a feature you'll soon love) that's linked to the remote central locking.

Inside, the layout is as unsurprising – and as German – as a Pils being served with a head on it, but the sense of comfort and quality is leagues ahead of some rivals. That starts with an L-shaped settee that offers more support for your legs and more comfort for your back (by virtue of softer, slightly pillow-like backrests). The upholstery is superbly finished in a mix of tweed

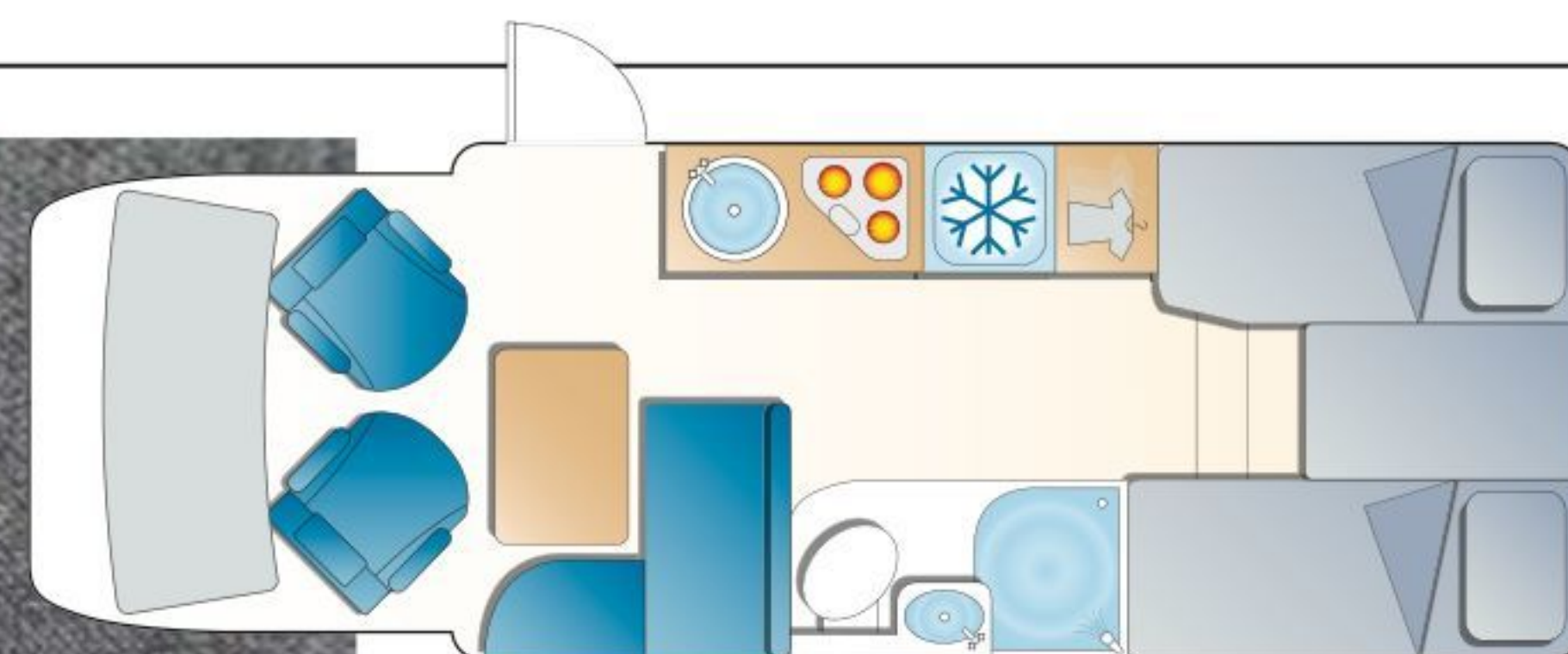
and suede-style materials that are, perhaps, the defining touch of the décor.

The cab seats turn easily, too, to join a sturdy table that slides fore/aft and side-to-side, while Roman blinds add privacy at the large side window and the opening overcab sunroof and deep window in the door allow plenty of daylight into the lounge. Artificial lighting is impressive, too, with the backlit sections at the side of the overcab being particularly attractive. Either 22in or 32in TVs are listed as factory options and Isofix is available for the rear travel seat.

The cab, lounge and kitchen are all on the same level, so there are no awkward steps to quite literally trip you up. But headroom doesn't



Best fixed bed coachbuilt (over £60k)



WHO IS DETHLEFFS?

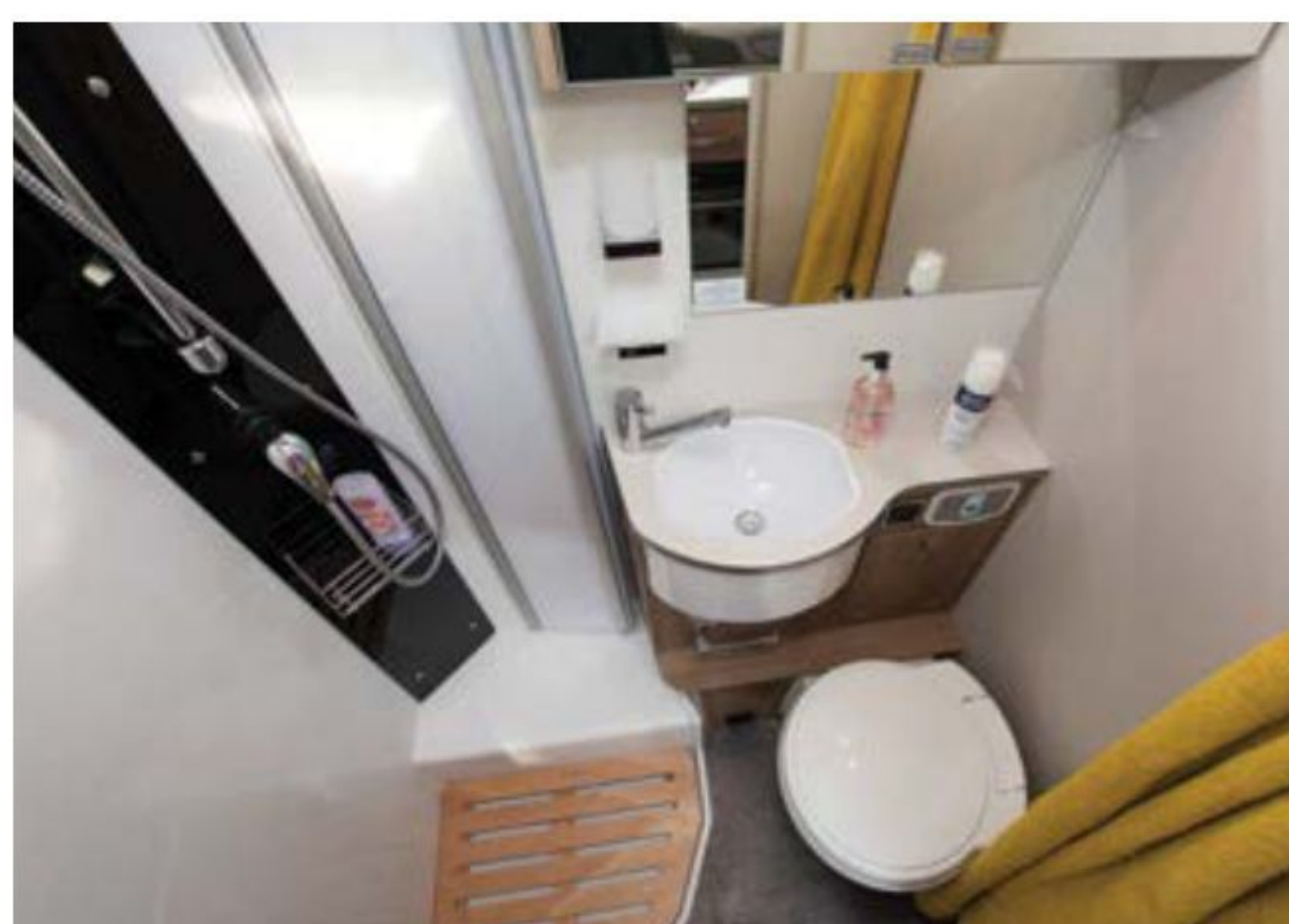
Incredibly, Dethleffs started as a whip manufacturer back in 1832. It wasn't until almost 100 years later that Arist Dethleffs built his first caravan, so that his family could travel with him on business, and serial production of caravans only replaced whips in 1956.

Dethleffs
A friend of the family

The company built its first motorhome – a pioneering low-profile called CD – in 1983, and A-classes followed just six years later, with the first tag-axle version coming in 1999.

The company's 'Friend of the Family' motto was introduced in 1995 and the McRent hire franchise debuted in 2004.

Today, Dethleffs is one of the largest brands in the Erwin Hymer Group and also builds van conversions for Globecar/Pössl.



suffer from the rear-drive chassis' higher floor; it's a generous 2.03m in the galley area.

Wall hooks in the kitchen are useful, while the Thetford Duplex combined oven and grill is mounted below the XXL cutlery drawer as one of the many upgrades to Globeline spec for the UK market. It's so much better than an oven located over the fridge/freezer, which here is a tall, slim model with a generous 142-litre capacity, a bottle drawer and automatic energy selection.

There are twin 230V sockets on the front of the kitchen unit, which work well in conjunction with the worktop flap at the end of the galley – the wide door here means it's still easy to pass by. And additional features include a fitted waste

bin and a deep drawer under the fridge for pots and pans. It's not a large galley but the space has been used wisely and the Virginia Oak furniture with high-gloss top locker doors gives a typically Dethleffs modern vibe.

Opposite the culinary department, the shower and loo share the same compartment, but the former is a decent size and the latter offers generous leg and shoulder room. Stylised Dethleffs 'D' logos form neat towel hooks as a finishing touch.

At the rear, we couldn't fault the comfort of the seven-zone mattresses and the single beds' sizes should suit most couples, at 1.93m and 1.85m long. There's also the usual central cushion

between the twin beds, allowing for loads of shoulder room at night. Or you can extend this area with a slide-out panel to turn the twin beds into a 2.11m-long transverse double.

Of course, another reason for choosing a single bed layout like this is the garage below – here measuring 1.21m high and 0.95m wide. Two full-sized loading doors serve this huge space and there's a full chassis extension underneath to support the garage area.

The Mercedes chassis is just part of the reason for Dethleffs securing this award, with the Globeline benefiting from this German brand's renowned quality and attention to detail, as well as greatly increased spec for UK buyers.

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Auto-Trail Tribute F60

Compact, well-priced and with the great-to-drive Ford chassis, the new Tribute is a star of the



If you want a classic British coachbuilt layout with an entry-level price tag, the obvious options have long been rivals from Elddis and Swift. Auto-Trail's Tribute coachbuilds showed some early promise when they debuted way back in 2010 but it's the all-new range for 2020 that should have the opposition worried.

Not only does this season's Tribute range mark a welcome return to the Ford chassis after a period on the ubiquitous (and ageing) Fiat Ducato, but here is a break from more traditional Auto-Trail design, with a fresh, modern line-up of low-profiles. There are only four models so far, but this F60 derivative is packed full of appeal if you're seeking a compact two-berth.

Like all the latest Auto-Trail coachbuilds, the new Tributes come with a choice of cab colour. Blazer Blue is the non-metallic standard shade but you can have Chrome Blue, Agate Black, Magnetic Grey, Moondust, Diffused Silver or this stunning Kapoor Red as part of the Drivers Pack. If you're brave, it can certainly make these newcomers stand out.

These don't look like back-to-basics entry-level motorhomes, either, with a standard spec that includes cruise control, reach and rake adjustment for the steering wheel, remote central locking (including the habitation door), driver and passenger airbags, a trip computer and a proper spare wheel, rather than a useless can of gunk.

Of course, you'll want to add the essential Lux Pack and Drivers Pack but, even with both on your shopping list, the F60 still leaves plenty of change from £50-grand. The Drivers Pack not only gives you the cab's metallic paint but also electric mirrors, automatic headlights, front foglamps with cornering function (incredibly useful when pitching up on a dark campsite), a heated windscreen, the posher Trend-spec dashboard, colour-coded bumpers and side mouldings, and cab air-conditioning. The Lux Pack enhances the spec still further with an impressive-looking Zenec Xzent 9.5in touchscreen display, which is such a focal point of the fascia and includes a motorhome-specific

**BEST
COACHBUILT
WITHOUT FIXED
BED (UNDER
£60K)**

entry-level class



FACT FILE	
BASE VEHICLE	Ford Transit
PRICE FROM	£45,845
BERTHS	2/4
TRAVEL SEATS	2/4
LENGTH	5.99m
WIDTH	2.35m
HEIGHT	2.88m
GROSS WEIGHT	3,500kg (3,650kg option)
PAYLOAD	640kg

BUY AN AUTO-TRAIL FROM...

Auto-Trail has a comprehensive network of retailers across the UK, from Perthshire Caravans in Scotland down to Marquis Leisure (Plymouth) in the southwest and JC Leisure (Rye) in the far southeast. In Northern Ireland the sole outlet is Abbey Caravans & Leisure. In all, the Auto-Trail website lists over 20 dealers for the brand in the UK, plus more in Australia and New Zealand (but none across the Channel). Also listed are companies that can rent you an Auto-Trail motorhome.



sat-nav. The reversing camera uses a separate screen (looking like a standard centre mirror) and the Lux spec also includes habitation kit such as a TV aerial, barbecue point, solar panel, Omnivent (with suck/blow fan over the galley), carpets and an upgraded door with a flyscreen.

If you want Ford's excellent six-speed automatic gearbox, then that's available, too (priced at a reasonable £1,740). And it's worth noting that it's possible to increase the versatility of the Tribute F60 by adding a drop-down bed and/or a half-dinette rear travel seat in place of the standard twin sofa lounge.

However you choose to specify your F60 model, though, it is properly compact. In fact,

with an overall length of just 5.99m, it's shorter than many van conversions. It's well-proportioned, too, with a commendably truncated rear overhang and a wide rear track for optimum handling.

You don't have to spend long behind the wheel to realise that the Ford cab adds massively to the Tribute's appeal, especially as key rivals are Fiat/Peugeot-based. Here, the driving environment feels more car-like, higher quality, better ergonomically and the small-diameter leather-bound steering wheel and low-set driving position are the icing on this particularly tasty Victoria sponge. Take a test drive and you'll be sold...

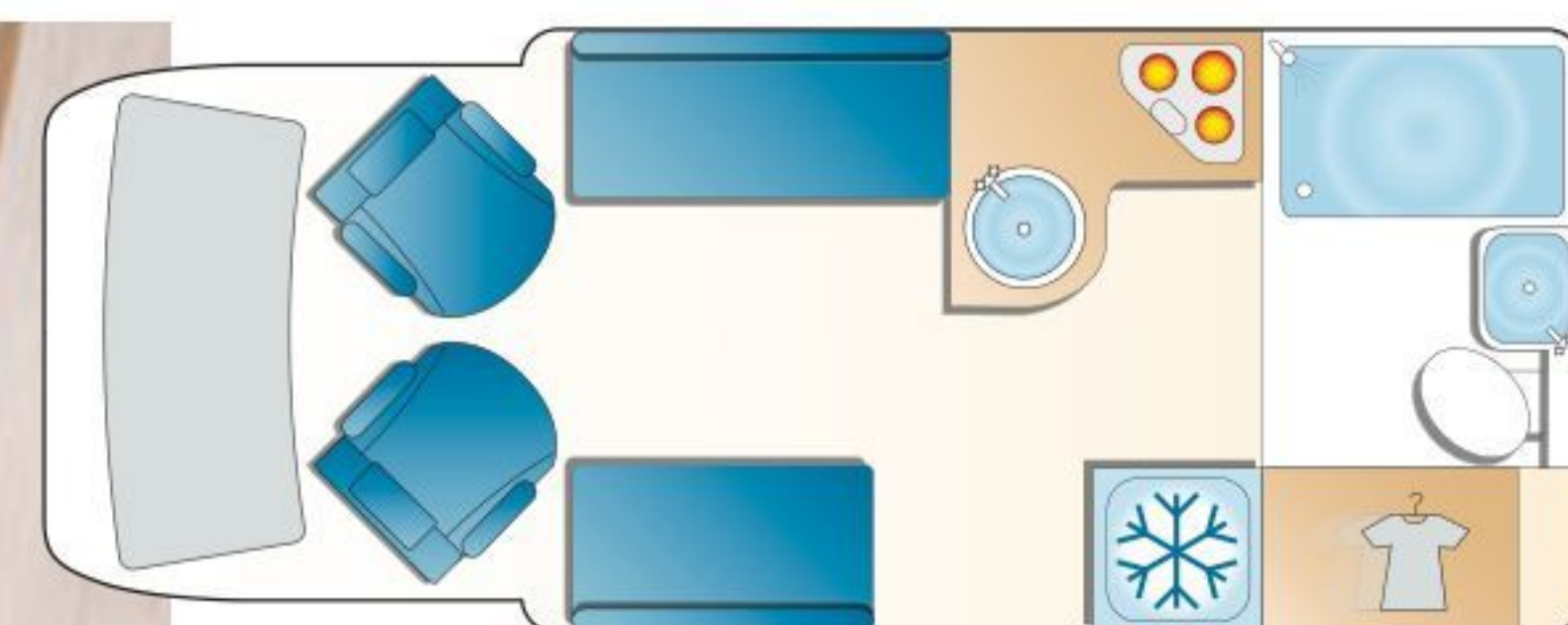
But it's not just because it's based on the

Transit that we like the new Tribute. This six-metre motorhome really packs a lot into its diddy dimensions and there's a flat floor right through the whole living area, with just a tiny step up into the cab.

The layout is key, of course, with a very open-plan feel in this standard side settee format. But it's also about the décor, with very pale coloured furniture, a great selection of interior lighting and a big overcab sunroof all adding to the airy interior that seems to belong in a bigger 'van. There's a really wide aisle through the front lounge and the cab seats swivel easily to give you plenty of room to relax. Headroom is excellent, too – over 2m in the kitchen and entrance areas.



Best coachbuilt without fixed bed (under £60k)



WHO IS AUTO-TRAIL?

AUTO TRAIL

Based in Grimsby, and part of the French-owned Trigano Group, Auto-Trail built its first motorhome in 1982. Many of its early vehicles were based on Mercedes-Benz chassis, but other base vehicles followed, including VWs, Talbots, Peugeots, Fords and Fiats, although the company has tended to focus on the luxury end of the coachbuilt market.

The entry-level Tribute models were originally marketed as a separate brand but became fully fledged Auto-Trails with a line-up of van conversions and coachbuilts in 2017. At the other end of the range, the flagship Frontiers include tag-axle models.

Auto-Trail's 2020 brochure also includes Adventure and V-Line van conversions and Imala, Apache and Tracker coachbuilts.



You can also convert the settees into a good-sized double bed (2.12m by 1.47m max), but a better option is to order the electric drop-down double, which measures 1.93m by 1.20m. Easily worth the extra £800, it means you can just turn a key and press a button at bedtime and enjoy a firm, comfortable one-piece mattress on a slatted base. And unlike some, the bed can be lowered right down as far as the seat height for easy, ladderless access.

Another aspect of the F60 that belies its low price is the washroom, which is also much larger than you'd expect in a six-metre 'van. Running right across the rear, this space doubles up as a changing area as it includes the large double-

door wardrobe. There's also a good-sized separate shower that's fully plastic-lined and has headroom for the tallest occupants, plus robe hooks and a towel ring, and plenty of storage for your toiletries.

So, you might expect the kitchen to have suffered, as a result. But no, here you have a three-burner hob and combined oven/grill, a generous amount of worktop, a huge (142-litre) fridge that requires no kneeling down to access and a large cutlery/implement drawer.

There's good high and low-level kitchen storage, too, while locker space under the lounge seats is unusually generous, thanks to the Tribute's Whale heating system being mounted

underfloor. And external storage – so important for grubby outdoor gear, but often omitted from British budget 'vans – features, too, in the form of a locker at the rear nearside (measuring 0.60m by 0.78m by 0.86m tall) as well as outside access into the nearside settee base.

With this new 2020-season range, Auto-Trail's Tribute coachbuilts have definitely come of age. They look contemporary, very well-priced and drive brilliantly thanks to the facelifted Ford Transit and its wide-track motorhome chassis. The F60 is the star of this four-'van line-up and, with a price that can remain under £50k even with the vital options packs and electric bed, it blows its closest British rivals away.



Danbury's not so little black number, The Raven.

Based on the ever-popular Ford Transit Custom 130ps Trend model, the Danbury 'Raven' comes with a very high-specification as standard and features a unique sliding rear seat system, for masses of extra storage space. Add a three-burner hob, full oven, bespoke leather upholstery, sporty alloy wheels, black side bars and a stylish finish, the Raven can tackle any family adventure, from the big shop to an unforgettable holiday.

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Vehicle shown is the Danbury 'Raven' with complete specification as stated. All details and prices are correct at time of printing. Danbury Campervans reserve the right to change specification and pricing without prior notice. T's & C's apply. See website for full details.

Adria Matrix Plus 600 DT

The key layout of 2020 is perfected by Adria ...



Photos Peter Rosenthal

If there's one key layout in the motorhome market right now, this is it: large front lounge with side-facing settees that convert into individual travel seats, an open-plan feel stretching back into a spacious kitchen, followed by an XXL washroom across the rear with super-sized wardrobe space that cleverly hides a garage underneath and, finally, of course a drop-down double bed up front. All packed into a 7m body, it's a design with so many positives for two people on tour (plus the versatility of occasional four-berth capability), that it's no wonder it took the market by storm in 2019.

Chausson was, unsurprisingly, the brand that was first out of the blocks with its quite brilliant

640 model, which sold so well that warm pâtisserie couldn't keep up. Bürstner was in on the act from the off, too, offering its Lyseo Harmony Line TD 680 G, while Rapido Group countered with a slight Gallic twist to the recipe, its well-priced Itineo FC650 being an A-class, rather than a low-profile.

Now, both Pilote and Adria have added competitors for the Chausson and Bürstner, with the Pacific P696D and the Matrix Plus 600 DT, respectively. Each of these models arguably moves the game on a tad and it was a tough decision to pick between the two for this award. In the end, the Slovenian 'van just got the nod over the French one.

A massive part of the appeal of this type of motorhome is the lounge, which is ideal for a couple to relax in. A pair of long (1.66m on the nearside, 1.36m offside) settees dominate the front half of this motorhome and, even though there's no overhead rooflight, the big sunroof above the cab and the large side windows behind each settee let daylight flood into the area. Both cab seats swivel around easily, too, and, as they're on the same level as the sofas, they integrate really well to increase your sprawling space. The settees also have knee rolls and shaped backrests for added comfort.

Adria often manages to make its motorhomes look more contemporary than a lot of its popular

**BEST
COACHBUILT
WITHOUT FIXED
BED (OVER
£60K)**



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Fiat Ducato
PRICE FROM £61,000
BERTHS 4
TRAVEL SEATS 4
LENGTH 6.99m
WIDTH 2.30m
HEIGHT 2.81m
GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg
PAYLOAD 439kg

BUY AN ADRIA FROM...

Adria's Scottish dealer is Struan Motors in Perth. In Northern Ireland it is Lisburn Caravans. Dinmore Leisure in Leominster is the closest to Wales. The other UK dealerships with this franchise are: Signature Motorhomes & Leisure (Lancashire), Geoff Cox Leisure (Derby), Brownhills (Newark), The Motorhome Depot (Redditch), CentraLeisure (Oxfordshire) Marquis Surrey, Howards Motorhomes (Taunton), Chelston (Wellington) and Highbridge Caravan Centre (Devon) and, finally, Becks in Norfolk.



rivals, and that's a neat trick it's pulled off here, too. The standard Zanna grey upholstery, combined with Symphony White furniture (wood-effect cabinets and gloss white cupboard doors), succeeds in being both ultra-modern and homely at the same time, which is really quite a result.

Another plus is the table, which not only slides fore and aft in the usual fashion, but can adjust for height, too. It also folds in half – a simple touch (which used to be the sole preserve of Rapidos) but one which makes a massive difference to the feeling of space, while leaving the table always in situ for that essential coffee break. Unfolded, it's huge, at 0.84m by 1.02m. As

in the opposition, the lounge area also converts into a couple of rear travel seats.

This floorplan isn't just about great lounging space – there's another major reason to buy at the opposite end of the 'van, where a silver tambour door closes off the rear washroom. Inside here the space is truly impressive. There's lots of room around the cassette loo to get comfortable, while the washbasin bowl sits on a generous section of grey worktop. A mirrored cabinet can hold all of your toiletries and there's an additional locker underneath the basin. A separate shower cubicle is on the opposite side and comes with good-quality aluminium-framed doors. The shower tray has two drains

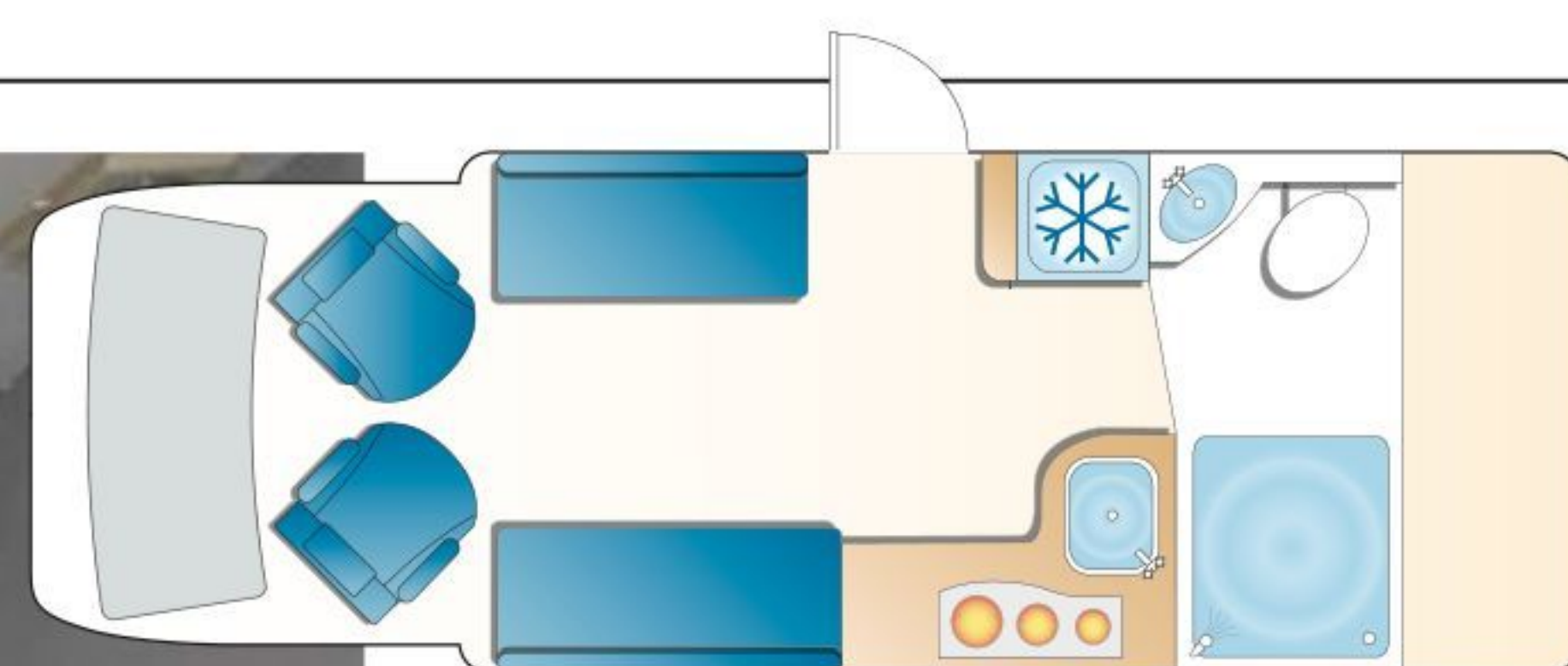
and the high-quality showerhead is mounted on an adjustable rail. There's also a usefully deep recess for your shampoo, conditioner and shower gel. Overhead, there's even a hanging rail for the inevitable soggy coats (this is Britain!) to drip-dry.

It's a palatial bathroom for any motorhome, let alone one so compact, but even better is that it's a changing room, too. There's loads of floor space as well as a massive wardrobe incorporated here. This is large enough to hold all of your clothes and includes a long hanging rail and deep his and hers drawers.

The really clever bit, though, is that hiding under the wardrobe is a full-sized garage with a



Best coachbuilt without fixed bed (over £60k)



WHO IS ADRIA?

Adria commenced caravan construction in 1965, with motorhomes then following in 1982. In 2017, the Slovenian firm became the newest member of the Trigano Group.



The whole of the current range sold in the UK is based on the Fiat Ducato (although Adria has previously used Citroën, Mercedes and Renault chassis), but it is a comprehensive line-up starting with van conversions and encompassing low-profiles (with and without drop-down beds, as well as slimline models), overcab coachbuilts and A-classes (right up to tag-axes).

The brand has developed a strong reputation for practicality and quality, while innovative ideas have included slide-outs, as well as today's van conversions with overcab sunroofs.



150kg load limit. It has access doors on both sides, twin drain holes for sluicing out, adjustable tie-downs and bike-friendly headroom of 1.17m. On the nearside there's even greater height when a shelf is folded to allow skis, etc, to be stowed vertically. Headroom here is an incredible 2.22m, with a full-height loading door to match. Whoever said you needed a fixed bed layout to have this much external storage?

In this almost TARDIS-like design the galley impresses, too – not least for its generous amount of worktop. Another myth busted here is that only British 'vans have great kitchens. Not any more. This L-shaped galley is a delight and

comes with a three-burners-in-line gas hob, a large sink complete with removable draining board, a Thetford grill and oven, and a whopping 167-litre fridge/freezer. There's plenty of storage as well, including drawers for cutlery and pots and pans, plus a wide slide-out larder with triple-shelved wire rack.

The final piece of this jigsaw is the night-time arrangement, which simply involves closing the (posh, concertina) blinds and flicking a switch. Then, down comes a 1.96m by 1.49m double bed, lowering until it's just 850mm off the floor for super-convenient access. Bedding can stay in situ on the bed, so that's another storage issue solved and, if you very occasionally need a four-

berth, this Matrix can serve that role, too, with double beds one above the other (the lower one created from the lounge settees).

Based on the wide rear track Camper version of the Fiat Ducato, the Adria comes with the 140bhp engine as standard but upgrades (and the automatic gearbox) are available. You'll need to add a pack of base vehicle options to the £61k base price but, for a top-quality low-profile like this, the price seems right.

In fact, with impressive storage, a superb lounge, great washroom and more, the latest addition to the Matrix will be as big and as expensive a 'van as most touring couples ever need. It's that good.

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Dreamer Camper Five

Two seating areas, bunk beds, a drop-down double, five travel seats... in a standard-sized van



DREAMER has previous in developing top-notch van conversions for families. Its Family Van is a long-established part of the range and rare in offering a bunk bed layout in the confines of a Fiat Ducato panel van – a 5.99m one at that. Then there's the Camper Van XL, which debuted last year and immediately took the win in this category. It uses the extra-long (6.36m) Ducato to great effect, with a fixed bed at the rear and a drop-down double over the forward lounge. We called it “a motorhome that'll make you question whether you really need anything bigger.”

Now, for the 2020 season, this French brand has come up with something truly unique – not

just a four-berth model but a five-person campervan with five belted travel seats and full facilities, still within the same dimensions as its Camper Van XL. Not only that, but it has recognised that families may not have the disposable income of the traditional retired couples that buy motorhomes and put the new Camper Five in its entry-level Fun line-up, rather than the more extensively appointed Select range (which includes both the Family Van and the Camper Van XL).

The base vehicle is an L4H3 Ducato – the longest, tallest van in the range, the extra height compared with the usual L4H2 model being essential for the drop-down bed. Otherwise,

there are no surprises with this panel van that so dominates the leisure market. White paint is standard, but you can upgrade to Aluminium Grey at extra cost. Likewise, there's an optional Safety Pack to add the latest Fiat features, if you so wish. Tick that box and you'll receive the Emergency Braking System, Lane Departure Warning System, High Beam Recognition, Traffic Sign Recognition and the Rain and Dusk Sensor – nothing essential but a few chocolate sprinkles for the gâteau.

What is essential – and you won't be able to buy a Camper Five without – is the (£1,590) Fun + Pack. That brings the cab spec up to par, including mod cons such as cab air-conditioning,

**BEST
FAMILY VAN
CONVERSION**

conversion... *incroyable!*



FACT FILE	
BASE VEHICLE	Fiat Ducato
PRICE FROM	£48,325
BERTHS	5
TRAVEL SEATS	5
LENGTH	6.36m
WIDTH	2.05m
HEIGHT	2.88m
GROSS WEIGHT	3,500kg
PAYLOAD	436kg

BUY A DREAMER FROM...

Dreamer is well represented across continental Europe but its retailers are more spread out on this side of *La Manche*. In the southwest you'll find Dreamer at Highbridge (in Somerset) and in the southeast the dealers are Wokingham Motorhomes (Berkshire) and Harbour Creek (Hayling Island). Newest addition to the network is Oakwell Motorhomes in Barnsley, while Dreamer also has an outlet in Northern Ireland (Thompson Leisure).

cruise control, height-adjustable front seats with armrests, a passenger airbag and a Pioneer radio with Bluetooth. It also adds ESC with traction control, Roll Over Mitigation and Hill Start Assist plus, more importantly perhaps, the 140bhp Euro 6d motor (instead of Fiat's entry-level 120bhp unit).

In addition, the Fun + Pack brings some important benefits to the living area, including an electric step and a flyscreen for the side door, cab blinds, plus a second leisure battery – something that you certainly wouldn't expect at this price point. It also features Truma's diesel-fired Combi heating and hot water system, reducing your reliance on gas and freeing up

locker space.

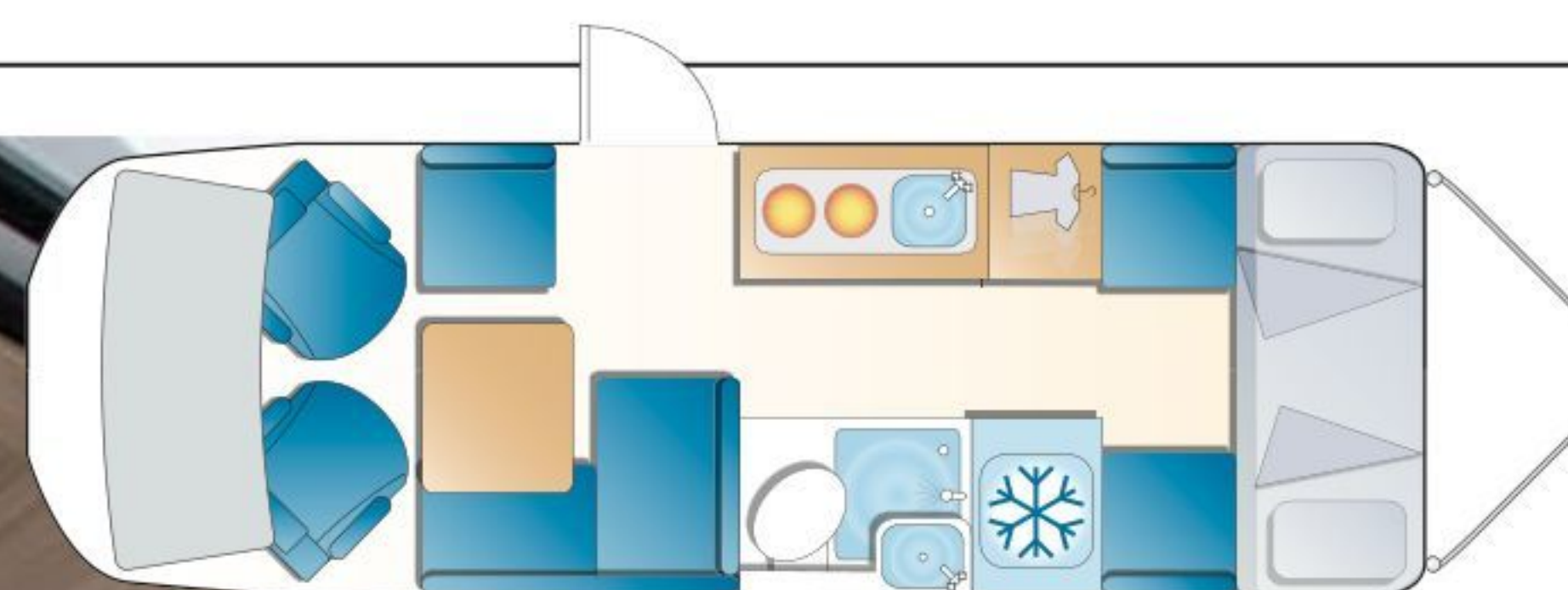
These, however, are the details. It's the layout – and especially the arrangement at the rear – that makes the difference. Not only does the Camper Five have the bunk beds that make it a practical family vehicle, but adjacent to the beds is a small, secondary seating area. There are single side-facing seats on each side here, with a cranked-leg table in the middle. And this isn't just a teeny-weeny dinette for little tots but big enough for a couple of teenagers, or for a parent to play board games with a child.

Because Dreamer uses the taller van, the bunks both have plenty of headroom, too. And they're a decent size – the top bed measuring

1.74m by 0.69m and the lower one being properly adult-sized, at 1.85m by 0.70m. Convert the mini-dinette into a bed and the lower berth becomes a kids' double with a mattress area that's 1.85m by 1.16m. The details have been addressed, too. Ventilation is provided by opening windows in both back doors, as well as a rooflight; each bunk has its own reading lamp, and there are USB sockets under the table.

Equally important, of course, is mum and dad's bed and parents will jump with joy when they realise that this doesn't involve turning the lounge, via a jigsaw of cushions of *Times* crossword complexity, into a bed as appealing (and lumpy) as school custard. Here, the bed





WHO IS DREAMER?

For the origins of Dreamer (a brand launched in 2014) you have to look to the Campérêve marque, which was acquired by Rapido. This long-established van conversion specialist's name is a French play on words, joining 'camper' and 'rêve' (meaning dream). Campérêve models (basically the same as Dreamer's Select range) are still sold in France but the brand was considered a bit of a mouthful for non-French speakers.



Dreamer's range is split into Fun models and more upmarket Select campers, with all but the Ford Transit Custom Cap Land based on Fiat Ducato.

Parent company, Rapido, is a major player in the van conversion sector, with Dreamer, Campérêve, the Rapido Van range, Westfalia, WildAx and Stylevan.



pulls down from the ceiling, your efforts being eased by gas struts. The Bultex mattress (1.83m by 1.27m) is comfy, the lounge below does not need to be disturbed and there are even storage pockets at the side of the bed. In the morning, with the berth quickly stowed (and duvet still in situ), there's 1.89m headroom beneath.

Not only does the lounge stay a lounge, but it's a more accommodating and comfortable space than the typical half-dinette that you might expect. There's an extra inward-facing seat by the sliding door and the main seating is a proper L-shape where you can comfortably sit facing the door (great on a warm day with it open).

In this format there are four travel seats –

when you need a fifth seatbelt you remove the cushion from the offside bench and clip in a complete lightweight seat, which faces rearwards and even has a folding false floor so that your size 7s aren't left dangling in mid air.

The kitchen has another great surprise in store for you – a fridge that not only looks like it's a refugee from a much larger 'van (135-litre capacity) but boasts automatic energy selection, too. Opposite, in the main galley unit, there are extra-large drawers for practical storage and a worktop flap adds preparation space. You can specify a gas oven as an option, too.

The washroom isn't nearly as basic as you'll see in some van conversions, either, although

you will have to employ a curtain when showering. A tambour door provides convenient access to the 'little room' and anyone who showers in a top hat (!) will be catered for by the 2.10m headroom. More important are the stylish new rectangular washbasin and plentiful storage.

Stowage space, of course, is crucial in a family-orientated camper and the fact that only the fifth (rear dinette) berth cannot have bedding left in place in the day is a huge plus. However, it's also good to note the large boot area (under the lower bunk) for wellies and other outdoor gear.

All in all, this is an immensely practical camper for a family with two or three kids. It's priced well and there's nothing else like it.

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Benimar Primero 313

A true family layout with bunk beds – and one that's compact of both size and price



OVERCAB coachbuilds make a lot of sense for family motorhoming. They might not be fashionable, aerodynamic or aesthetically appealing but, unlike a drop-down bed in a low-profile, the luton area is available all the time, day or night, whenever it's required. It's a space that kids love as a play area or den, and it can provide useful extra stowage for lightweight items such as coats and soft toys (I wonder how many teddy bears would fit up there?). There are good reasons why this type proved so popular for decades and a few manufacturers have started to reintroduce them to their portfolios, especially at the entry-level. One such maker is Spanish brand, Benimar, with its Primero range.

Crucially, as this is family holidays we're talking about, the Primero range is keenly priced, starting at £48,995. And that's not a 'price from' with this pack and that pack to add to give you a realistic specification. It's an all-inclusive figure that even encompasses your first year's insurance (subject to the usual Ts and Cs). You might want to add the automatic gearbox (pricey, at three grand, but appealing now that it's a slick nine-speed number) or a towbar, at £1,350, but the extras list goes no further. You'll have to negotiate with your dealer for an awning and bike rack but the mounting rails for the latter are factory-fitted. And, if you think you'll need to max out your payload and you have a C1 category

driving licence, then an upgrade to a 3,650kg gross weight is free of charge. It'll up your carrying capacity to an impressive 740kg.

Even in standard form, the Primero 313 has a respectable 590kg payload and one of the reasons for that is that this isn't a lengthy leviathan of a 'van. At just 5.99m overall, it'll squeeze into a few parking bays without overhanging so much that it'll bear comparison with the Hulk's garments. As a motorhome that seems destined to appeal to first-time buyers, its size will also be a lot less daunting if you're more used to driving a Fiesta.

It's good to see, too, that although the Primero is compact, it doesn't come with Fiat's lowliest motor – the 140bhp unit is standard spec here.

**BEST
FAMILY
COACHBUILT**

FACT FILE
BASE VEHICLE Fiat Ducato

PRICE FROM £48,995

BERTHS 6

TRAVEL SEATS 6

LENGTH 5.99m

WIDTH 2.30m

HEIGHT 3.05m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg
(3,650kg option)

PAYLOAD 590kg

BUY A BENIMAR FROM...

The Benimar brand is sold throughout the Marquis network, with its 13 outlets covering most of England – from Golden Cross (Sussex), Poole, Plymouth and now Exeter in the south to Preston and County Durham in the north.



In Scotland, Benimars are sold through Marquis' partners, The Motorhome Company, in Perthshire, while, in Northern Ireland, Camper NI has been appointed.



Also included at no extra cost are driver and passenger airbags, cruise control, ESP, cab seats with twin armrests, heated mirrors and a touchscreen DAB radio with Bluetooth. More surprisingly, the 2020-season update has added alloy wheels to the kit list, while the wide rear track Camper chassis is an important advantage in terms of on-road handling and stability, especially as this is a tall vehicle at just over 3m. The short rear overhang provides further evidence that this motorhome will not faze its driver when the road conditions are more challenging.

There don't appear to have been any corners cut in the body construction, either. It's a 99% wood-free build with XPS insulation. Not only

that, but the conversion has NCC approval and it satisfies the Grade III standard for heating/insulation. The habitation windows are the more secure and better-looking framed type, which is a surprise at this price level, while the habitation door on the UK side reflects the importance of the British market to this Trigano Group marque – and the buying power of sister company and importer, Marquis.

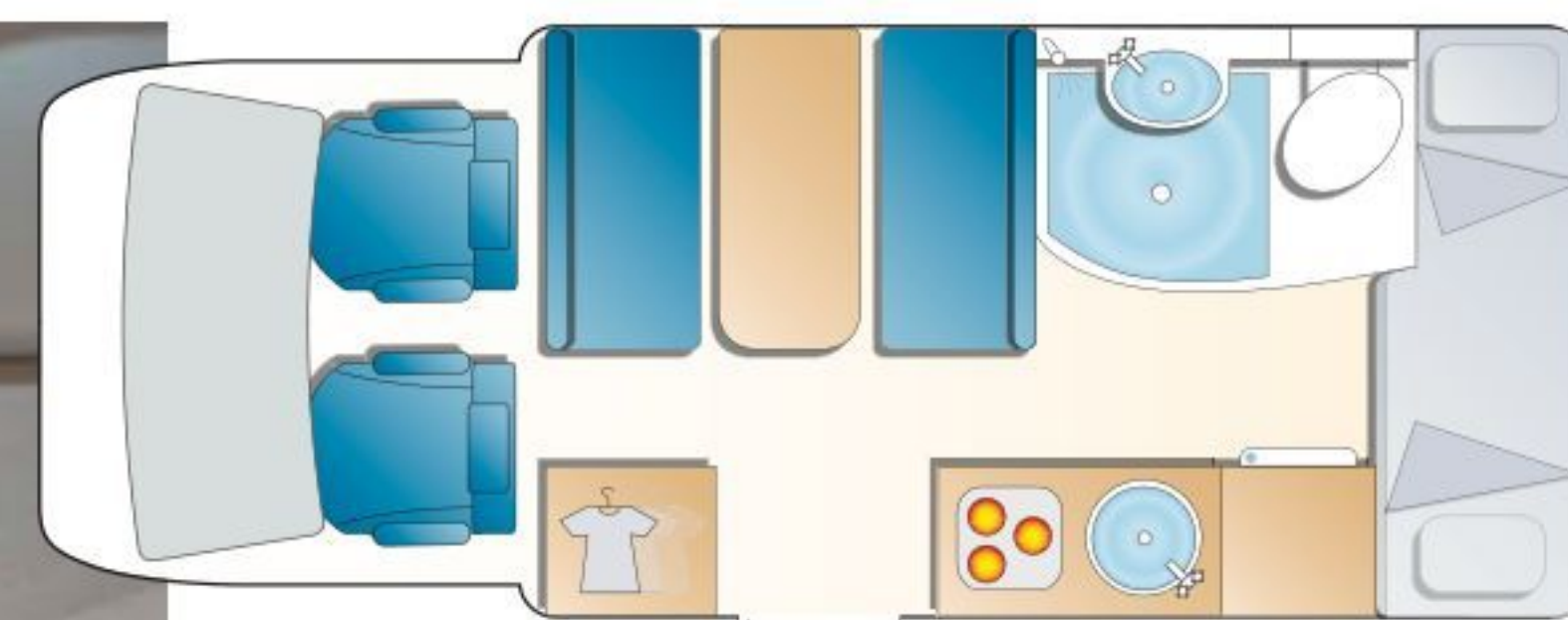
Inside, the Primero looks much like the more expensive Mileo, with duo-tone upper locker doors that Benimar calls Marel Ash and white. But the layout here is not one you'll find in the Mileo range. This new 313 model is the most family-friendly of all Primeros, featuring rear

bunk beds and a pullman-style lounge up front.

The dinette has seatbelts on both the forward and rear-facing pews, so there are six belts to match the sextet of beds (overcab double, second double made from the dinette and two bunk beds aft). However, with room for just four around the wall-mounted table and the cab area not really being employed on site (there are no swivels on the front seats), it may be best to see the Primero as a great four-berth with potential for the kids to occasionally invite a friend or two along for the ride (just add a tent outside).

What you won't have to do is trade up to a larger 'van as your kids grow. The rear bunks are big enough to serve the lankiest of teenagers at a





WHO IS BENIMAR?

This Spanish maker developed a strong following here in the late 1990s and early 2000s based on great value for money, primarily with its Europe and Europe Top overcab coachbuilds. It then disappeared from the UK scene, before being reintroduced by Marquis in 2014, firstly with Mileo low-profiles on Fiat.



The Mileo range has grown to include a wider choice of layouts as well as overcab coachbuilds, while Tessoro low-profiles added Ford-based models to the line-up. Entry-level Primero coachbuilds on Fiat and a pair of Benivan van conversions followed, the latter actually built in the UK by Auto-Trail.

Benimar is owned by the French Trigano Group, which also encompasses manufacturers including Adria, Auto-Sleepers, Auto-Trail, Chausson, Mobilvetta and Roller Team, as well as major retailer (and Benimar importer), Marquis Leisure.



generous 2.00m by 0.80m, while each bunk comes with its own opening window for ventilation and a separate curtain for privacy.

Mum and dad, meanwhile, can enjoy the luton overcab's 2.05m by 1.55m bed (manufacturer's figures) and the fact that this space has a rooflight, opening window and twin, individually-switched, reading lights. The top of the wardrobe is conveniently adjacent for bedtime reading matter, glass of water, etc.

The galley, running along the nearside, aft of the habitation door, reminds you that this isn't a big 'van. It's a little lacking in worktop space but that deficit is made up for by a swing-out extension on the dining table, which will be

useful when you're serving up. You'll also be pleased to find that the culinary spec includes not only a dual-fuel gas/mains hob but a combined oven and grill, too. There's an 80-litre three-way fridge and a useful amount of storage, including a large soft-closing cutlery drawer. Fortunately, Benimar hasn't sacrificed essential cupboard space to try to squeeze a microwave in.

The washroom isn't large enough to provide a separate shower but it is a practical space of adequate dimensions, as well as having a swivel cassette loo, fixed basin, roof vent and opening window. A large mirror, towel rail and hooks, toothbrush mug and cupboard space are provided, too.

Another important aspect of a family 'van is storage and, here, the Primero has two winning cards – the fact that bedding can be left in situ in the overcab and on the bunks (so does not take up important locker space) and also the possibility of folding up the lower bunk bed to create a small garage. Even with the bed down, there's a usefully large locker below, as well as external loading doors on either side.

Truma 6kW gas/electric heating and a generous 120-litre fresh water tank are more unexpected bonuses in a motorhome that is far from revolutionary but manages to pack a lot of family-orientated features into a compact body, and at a price that families can afford.

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2008 HORIZONS UNLIMITED CAVARNO 2. FORD 2.2 TDi (130BHP) 2 berth SWB hitop, 39,000 mls. Full FORD history. Swivel front seats, 4 seat belts, shower, cass toilet, microwave, recessed awning, air con metallic light blue£24,500

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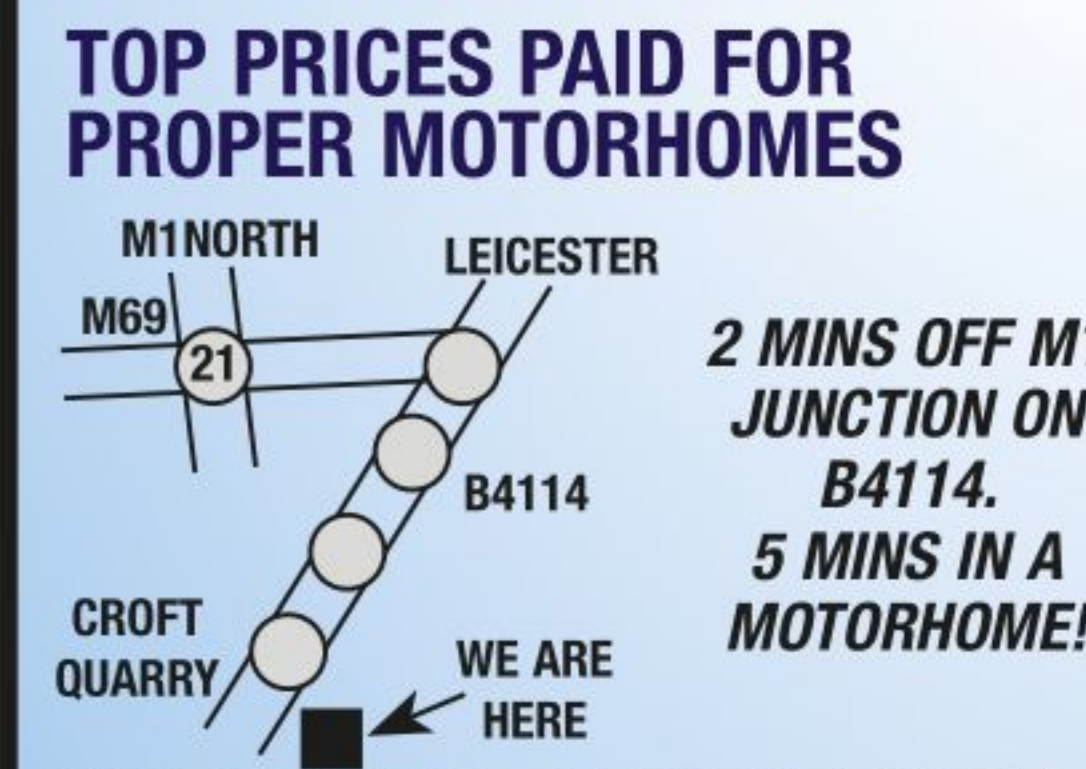
2000 HYMER SWING 544 FIAT 2.8 JTD. 5 berth coachbuilt, 59,000 mls. 6 seat belts, Pullman dinette opp. long sofa, pass swivel, large bathroom, end kitchen. Cavernous rear storage. Perfect family layout£15,995

2000 AUTOSLEEPER SYMBOL PEUGEOT 1.9 TURBO DIESEL. Rare 4 berth MWB hitop 86,000mls, shower, cass toilet, pass. swivel, double or 2 singles, blown air, oven, awning, bike rack. The ever popular£16,000

1998 AUTOSLEEPER DUETTO FORD LWB 2.5 Diesel. 2 berth, 2 singles or double, shower, cass toilet, blown air, oven, pass, swivel, awning, bike rack, Perfect FTB£11,250

1998 COMPASS NAVIGATOR 360E. VW 2.5 Turbo Diesel LWB. 4 berth. 53,000 mls. Two long sofas, end kitchen with oven, corner bathroom, overcab double, pass. swivel, roll out awning.....£13,500

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Chausson 520

Just because this 'van is small doesn't mean you have to lose out on lounge space, or a big washroom,



If you're looking for a compact motorhome with 'all mod cons' then six metres is the cut-off point. Few coachbuilds are more than the odd centimetre less than this (and, actually, quite a lot of van conversions now stretch the tape measure further). It's not just an arbitrary figure, either, but one that takes into account parking and manoeuvring, as well as saving some pennies on certain ferry routes. If you like to get to more out-of-the-way places, stay on small farm sites, or are just put off by the thought of driving anything bigger, this could be the size of 'van for you.

It's also a category in which the French firm, Chausson, has long offered interesting designs. After all, when space is limited, the designer

needs to use his little grey cells to full effect and few brands are as innovative as the one from Tournon-sur-Rhône.

Enter the Chausson 520, a new model for 2020 that offers the company's Smart Lounge in its smallest motorhome yet. And, when you enter this little low-profile, you'll instantly be struck by just how spacious it is. If Doctor Who was French and the outside was blue, we'd know exactly where the design inspiration came from...

It's not just about the lounge, though, for this new layout has what so many compact models lose out on to stay small – external storage. And, as anyone who has lugged outdoor chairs and a barbecue through a habitation door and then tried

to stow them safely somewhere inside will know, one thing you really won't want to do without is a convenient home for your outdoor gear.

The 520's rear locker isn't a garage, but the top-hinged door in the rear wall opens onto a very useful compartment with a maximum interior height of 0.95m and a depth of 0.35m. Two folding shelves are provided to make the area more versatile and Chausson also fits mounting points for a bike rack on the outside.

While we're on the subject of storage, it's worth noting that you don't need to look for somewhere to keep that other bulky essential, your bedding. The 520's main bed is, of course, an electric drop-down number – Chausson was

**BEST
COMPACT
COACHBUILT**

or even external storage



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Ford Transit
(also available on Fiat Ducato)
PRICE FROM £50,175
BERTHS 4
TRAVEL SEATS 4
LENGTH 5.99m
WIDTH 2.35m
HEIGHT 2.92m
GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg
PAYLOAD 651kg

BUY A CHAUSSON FROM...

Chausson has 14 dealers around the UK. Central Motorhomes represents the French brand in Northern Ireland, while Knowepark Caravans is the retailer for Scotland and 3A's Motorhomes is the dealer for Wales.



In England, Chausson has dealers as far north as Tyne Valley (Newcastle), as far south as Premier Motorhomes & Leisure (Chichester), as far west as Highbridge Caravan Centre (Somerset) and as far east as Simpsons Motorhomes (Great Yarmouth, Norfolk).

For those heading off on a grand tour, it's also reassuring to know that Chausson has dealers all over Europe, including Sweden, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Greece, although none are listed on the Iberian Peninsula.

at the forefront of this novelty, which has now become mainstream – and you can leave your duvet and pillows in situ when you raise the bed back up to the ceiling.

Unlike some rivals, it's also possible to bring the bed right down to seat height for easy access (although not if you're also using the second bed below, turning the 520 into an occasional four-berth!). The drop-down bed measures a very respectable 1.88m by 1.39m, narrowing to 1.20m at the foot.

With the bed stowed and the cab seats swivelled, you'll soon forget that you're in a 'small' motorhome. The interior of the 520 feels huge. In fact, there's room to accommodate

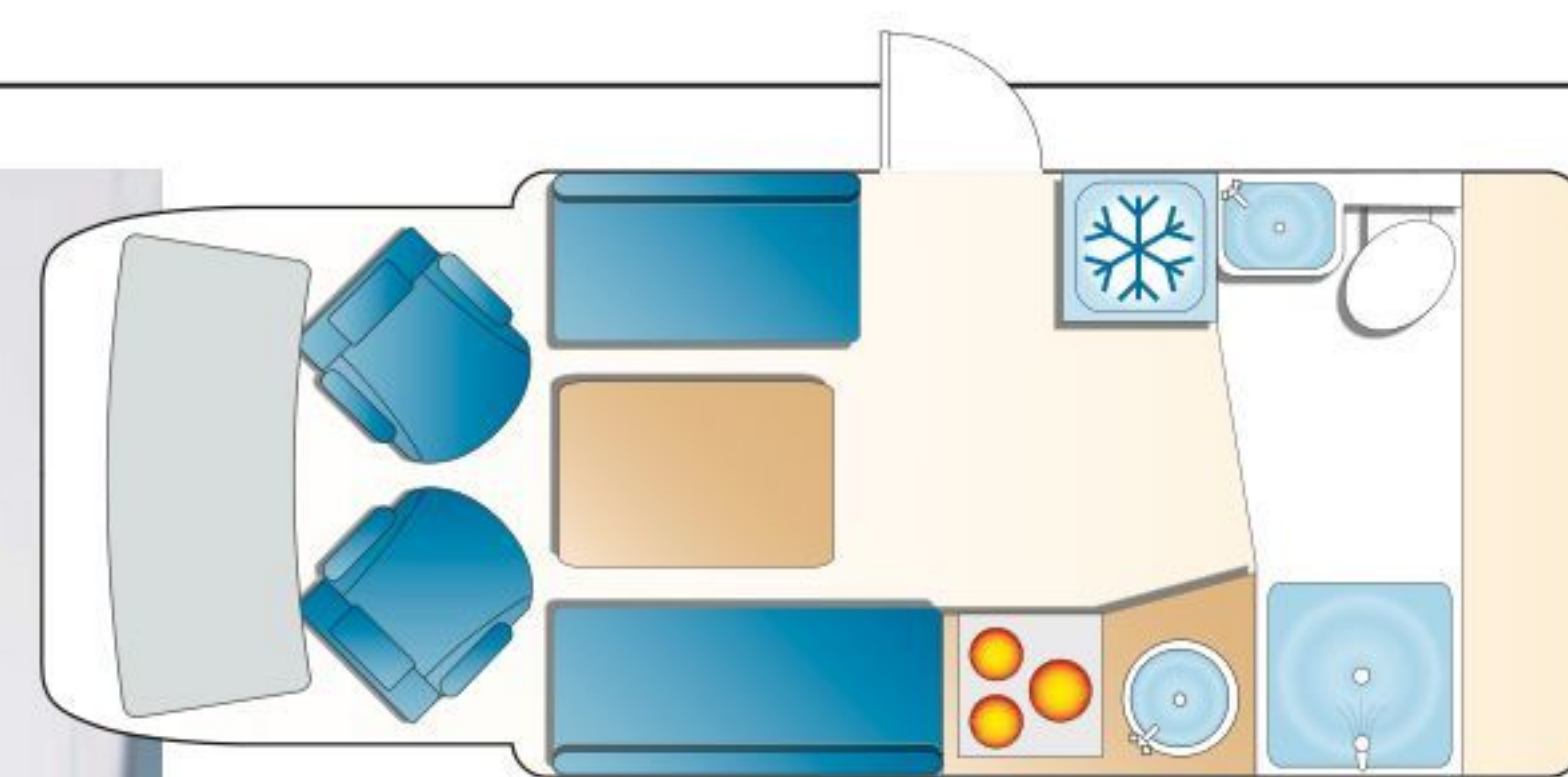
seven people in the lounge, with a nearside settee that's more than a-metre-and-a-half in length and an offside sofa that's virtually a metre long. The table is one of those neat fold-in-half designs, too, so it's unobtrusive when you've got your feet up with a good book, but of banqueting proportions when you've unfolded it (to 1.00m by 0.82m) for serving up all the local delicacies you've bought at that morning's market.

When it comes to cooking such a gastronomic masterpiece, you'll be thankful that Chausson has also paid attention to the desires of British motorhomers in the kitchen. Unlike some imported brands, it hasn't just stuffed an oven over the fridge where you'll need a stepladder to see what you've

cremated because you couldn't see it cooking, but it's actually redesigned the galley to accommodate a Thetford Triplex cooker with combined oven/grill built in just below counter height. There's a flip-up worktop extension, too, as well as some preparation space in front of the sink (which is set further back in the counter), but the star of the show is the 167-litre two-door fridge/freezer opposite – you really can stock up in this 'van.

For some buyers, though, the best bet has yet to come – the huge rear washroom. Go past the kitchen, up a small step and through a tambour door and you'll find yourself in this spacious facility with the obligatory Thetford swivel-bowl loo, a rectangular white resin basin fed by a





WHO IS CHAUSSON?

Chausson motorhomes are built by Trigano VDL, with its main factory in the picturesque Ardèche region of France. One of the largest leisure vehicle factories in Europe, this site also manufactures the Challenger brand (which is not sold here).

CHAUSSON

Chausson has been represented here since 2003 and the UK is the marque's second-largest export market. Based on good-value pricing and innovative designs, the company has also become the best-selling imported retail brand in Britain.

The 2020-season range includes overcab coachbuilds and 33 Line van conversions, but the bulk of its line-up is low-profiles – all bar the 711 Travel Line available on either Ford Transit or Fiat Ducato. The Flash and Welcome names have been dropped this season but standard models can be upgraded with a VIP Pack or further enhanced by adding the optional Premium Pack.



chromed metal tap, a worktop for your toiletries and an overhead cupboard with a sliding mirrored door. A toothbrush mug and a soap bar holder are thoughtfully provided, as are an opening window and roof vent for ventilation.

Opposite the loo is a separate shower cubicle that's tall enough for those over 6ft. It's a first-class shower and the area also doubles up as somewhere to drip-dry your wet coats as it has a fold-down hanging rail. Also in this area, located over the exterior boot, is an XXXL wardrobe, so the washroom becomes a great changing room, too. The wardrobe includes three shelves and a couple of slide-out hanging rails for maximum clothing storage flexibility.

Then there's the base vehicle. Uniquely in the market, Chausson offers almost all of its motorhomes with a choice of chassis – Fiat Ducato or Ford Transit. The Fiat is, of course, familiar to anyone who has ever opened the pages of this magazine and it comes with a 120bhp engine, which can be upgraded at extra cost. The Ford counters that with 128bhp (130PS) as standard and a £630 lower starting price, but neither of those factors are deal-makers or breakers. What wins it – oh, so easily – for the Ford is the way it drives and the way it looks and feels in the cab. If ever you needed an example of how commercial vehicle design has moved on in the last decade, just compare these two. The

Transit has the nicer dashboard, better driving position, smoother ride, better gearshift... And, if you don't want to change gears yourself, the price advantage of the Ford increases by a further two grand in automatic form.

That just leaves you to decide how well spec'd you want your Chausson 520. There's no Titanium version (that's reserved for the longer 640) and the VIP Pack is essential as it adds items like a passenger airbag and cab air-conditioning (as well as not-so-essential features like a colour-coded bumper). But you can decide whether or not you need the niceties of the Premium Pack (£2,200). With or without, the 520 is a great little motorhome.

ACCESSORIES



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Hymer Exsis-i 580

Compact, modern and available on a 3.5-tonne chassis, this latest Exsis is a great first A-class



WHO IS HYMER?



Hymer is a German motorhome brand that has been represented in the UK longer than any of its compatriots. Famous for its B-Class models (which, confusingly, are usually A-class, or fully-integrated, motorhomes), the latest range includes three categories of models (as well as a separate campervan range which used to be known as HymerCar).

The Comfort Plus Class models are Exsis-t and Exsis-i, plus the Mercedes-based T-Class S low-profiles. Next up is the Superior Class of ML-T (rear-wheel drive Merc low-profiles) and B-Class ModernComfort (B-MC, for short). Then, at the top of the tree, are the Luxury Class 'vans – B-Class SupremeLine (B-SL) on Fiat and the latest addition, the MasterLine (B-ML) on Mercedes.

Hymer is just one marque within the huge Erwin Hymer Group, which in turn is now owned by Thor Industries in America.



THINK A-class motorhome and one name will probably jump into your head – Hymer. But as your little grey cells are conjuring up an image, you'll also no doubt be thinking of something big and expensive.

Now, let's try again. Shrink that image in your mind, but retain the classic Hymer shape, style and proportions. And look at the price tag. OK, £66,980 (or more like £80k with a tasty selection of options to bring the spec up to what UK buyers want) is still a lot of money – and a good deal more than some of our other award winners – but it's not a huge figure for a top-quality A-class.

Neither is the Exsis-i 580 a huge motorhome – it's under seven metres long and just 2.22m wide.

Of course, the Exsis name has always been associated with compact Hymeres and the current style replaced the previous Ford-based models in 2012. This is a lower motorhome, too, at just 2.77m and, combined with the wide-track rear axle, it promises stable and surefooted handling.

Crucially, it can also offer a respectable payload on a 3.5-tonne chassis, so you can drive it on a standard car licence and not suffer the reduced speed limits and higher tolls that apply to heavier vehicles when touring on the Continent. Lightweight doesn't mean any loss of quality, though – Hymer's proven PUAL 2.0 construction is wood-free and eliminates thermal bridges.

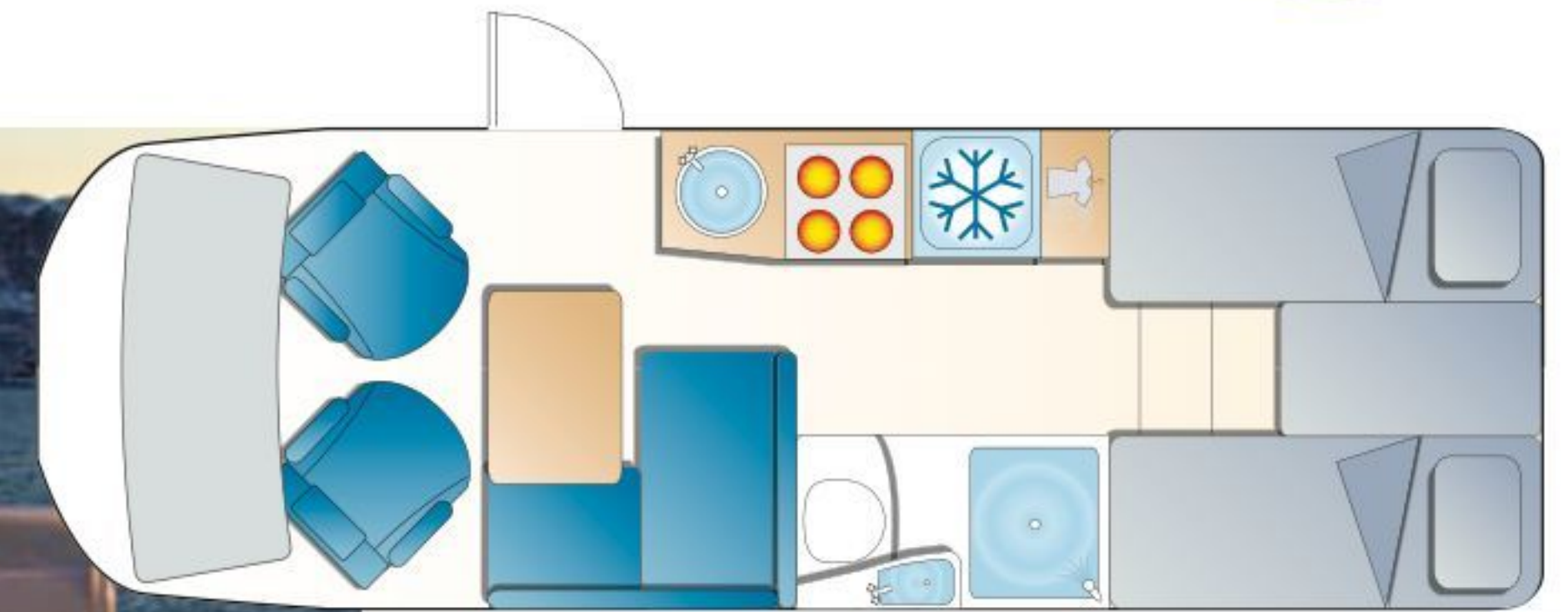
The 580 is a new model for the 2020 season,

based on Fiat's own low chassis, rather than the Al-Ko frame of yore. That's helped to give the newcomer more competitive pricing.

Not only that but, of course, the latest Fiat chassis comes with updated Euro 6d engines – 120bhp is standard but 160bhp would be our pick – and the new nine-speed automatic gearbox option. There are new assistance systems, too, including Full Brake Function (FBC), Blind Spot Assist (BSA) and High Beam Recognition.

Also new for the 580 model is the interior design. The layout adopts that continental favourite of high single beds over a rear garage but the full-width cab and giant windscreen give an added feeling of space. That's enhanced by the

**BEST
A-CLASS**



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Fiat Ducato

PRICE FROM £66,980

BERTHS 4

TRAVEL SEATS 4

LENGTH 6.99m

WIDTH 2.22m

HEIGHT 2.77m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg
(optional 4,250kg)

PAYLOAD 570kg (standard model)

BUY A HYMER FROM...

Hymer has established a nationwide dealer network, ranging from Knowepark Caravans in Scotland down to Premier Motorhomes & Leisure and Southdowns Motorhome Centre on the south coast. Other outlets are Lowdhams (at both Huddersfield and Nottingham), Erwin Hymer Centre Travelworld (Stafford), Becks Motorhomes (Norfolk), Cranham Leisure Sales (Essex), and Highbridge Caravan Centre (Somerset). Of course, as one of Europe's premier motorhome marques, Hymer has retailers all over – from Russia to Portugal, as well as worldwide. The EHG group as a whole boasts over 1,200 dealers.



light wall colouring and contemporary décor featuring new Sauvignon Oak. Good headroom of 1.98m also helps with the roomy feel.

A stepped floor maintains the same comfortable level for all four occupants of the lounge, while a deep window in the door and a Hymer-branded wind-up sunroof ensure there's plenty of daylight. Over the cab, the drop-down double bed operates easily, demonstrating the brand's preeminence in the A-class world.

The galley has a subtle angle at the forward end to broaden the aisle. The big news here, though, is that you can have your Exsis with a full British-style cooker with separate oven and grill. Kitchen storage is taken care of by four soft-closing

drawers, while the cabinetwork is a mix of modern high-gloss white, lots of pale grey and that new wood. There's a flip-up worktop, as well as a loose-fit sink cover, to ensure that you don't run out of preparation space and the fridge is a tall/slim number with a generous 142-litre capacity.

The rear beds are 1.88m and 1.90m long but, if you're especially tall, it's possible to delete the floor-to-ceiling wardrobe (next to the fridge) and add 20cm to the mattress length on this side. There's a generous (if not particularly tall) wardrobe under the offside bed, anyway. Unusually, Hymer has deleted the cupboards over the head of the beds, so you can now sit up comfortably and use the corner reading lights to

enjoy a good book.

The final aspect of the floorplan is the nearside washroom with its bench cassette loo, stylish angled basin (for increased shoulder room when on the throne) and a semi-separate shower with doors that pull around you on a ceiling track.

On the outside, the most important feature is the generous garage with bike-friendly 1.19m headroom and a maximum load of 350kg.

Of course, there are plenty of extras to bring the Exsis spec to your exact requirements. Or, if you're quick, you might be able to bag one of the limited edition 580 Pure models, which swap Fiat power for a Citroën chassis and offer a like-for-like saving of over £11k. Even better!

Le Voyageur LV 7.8 LU

Top-of-the-range luxury motorhomes don't have to be German, as this stylish rear lounge Gallic



THERE seems to be a small but growing interest in A-class motorhomes with a rear lounge. Whether you're looking at the more affordable end of the sector, where Roller Team's Pegaso 745 sits alone, at the middle ground in which Rapido's 9094dF excels, or at the very top end where Carthago's Liner-for-two and Frankia's Plus models have become well established, it's not hard to see the appeal of the concept, especially where generous external storage has been incorporated to make up for the loss of under-bed space. After all, you've got the drop-down bed in the cab, which is an A-class staple without the compromises of a lowerable bed in a low-profile – and some of these latest

rear lounge designs just feel oh-so-spacious.

The latest model to join the sector comes from Pilote Group's upmarket Gallic brand, Le Voyageur, and it actually reinvents a design that was popular for its parent company back in the early 90s.

This, however, is a much more prestigious beast, albeit with a sense of style that is wholly different from the usual German brands that compete in this £100k-plus niche of the motorhome world. Fancy a bit of French chic? Well, the LV 7.8 LU has it by the *camion* load and there's A-class expertise going back to 1981 to back it up, too.

The really important bit in this design,

though, is at the back. Someone at the Angers factory in the Loire valley clearly has an eye for style, for this is not your typical end lounge. In fact, it's not like any other we can remember. Built around an octagonal table that's large enough for four hungry gastronomes, is a settee that replicates the tabletop's shape, creating a five-sided sofa that looks perfect for convivial evenings with friends or family. It's not as big a lounge as in Carthago's Liner-for-two (last year's Ultimate class winner) but the area feels more spacious once the table has been folded in half, and there's plenty of room for two to relax. Neat corner wardrobes are also incorporated here and they automatically illuminate and pull your

**BEST
ULTIMATE
A-CLASS**

alternative proves



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Fiat Ducato Al-Ko

PRICE FROM £102,080

BERTHS 2/4

TRAVEL SEATS 4

LENGTH 7.85m

WIDTH 2.24m

HEIGHT 2.95m

GROSS WEIGHT 4,500kg

PAYLOAD 810kg (standard model)

BUY A LE VOYAGEUR FROM...

Once represented by a sole UK dealer, Le Voyageur now has four outlets in England and one in Northern Ireland. The southernmost retailer for the brand is Wilmoths in Southampton, while Pullingers Leisure Vehicles is in Essex and, further north, you'll find Oakwell Motorhomes in Barnsley and Signature Motorhomes & Leisure in Preston. Across the Irish Sea, the dealer is Provincial Motorhomes.



shirts and skirts towards you when you open the doors – clever.

The *pièce de résistance* in the lounge, though, is the TV Pack. As well as the 32in Teleco full HD screen, this includes an automatic 85cm satellite dish and decoder, wall-mounted Jahnert speakers and amplifier and, coolest of all, an electrically rising bracket that sees the telly appear – James Bond style – from the end of the galley.

The lounge also hides a secret – a good-sized garage below. It's up to 1.19m high (across a minimum of 43cm wide), reducing to 74cm tall under the lounge seating. There are upper and lower tie-downs to secure your

bikes, plus 12V and 230V sockets and a full-width LED strip light.

Unlike its top-end rivals, the Le Voyageur also has a lounge at the front, adding versatility to the design and making it much more practical if you ever want to carry more than two people on board. It's not the usual half-dinette – instead, the cab's swivel Aguti captain's chairs turn to face individual forward-facing seats, thus creating a roomy four-person lounge. Each of the mini-dinettes has its own table that can be stored away safely for travel.

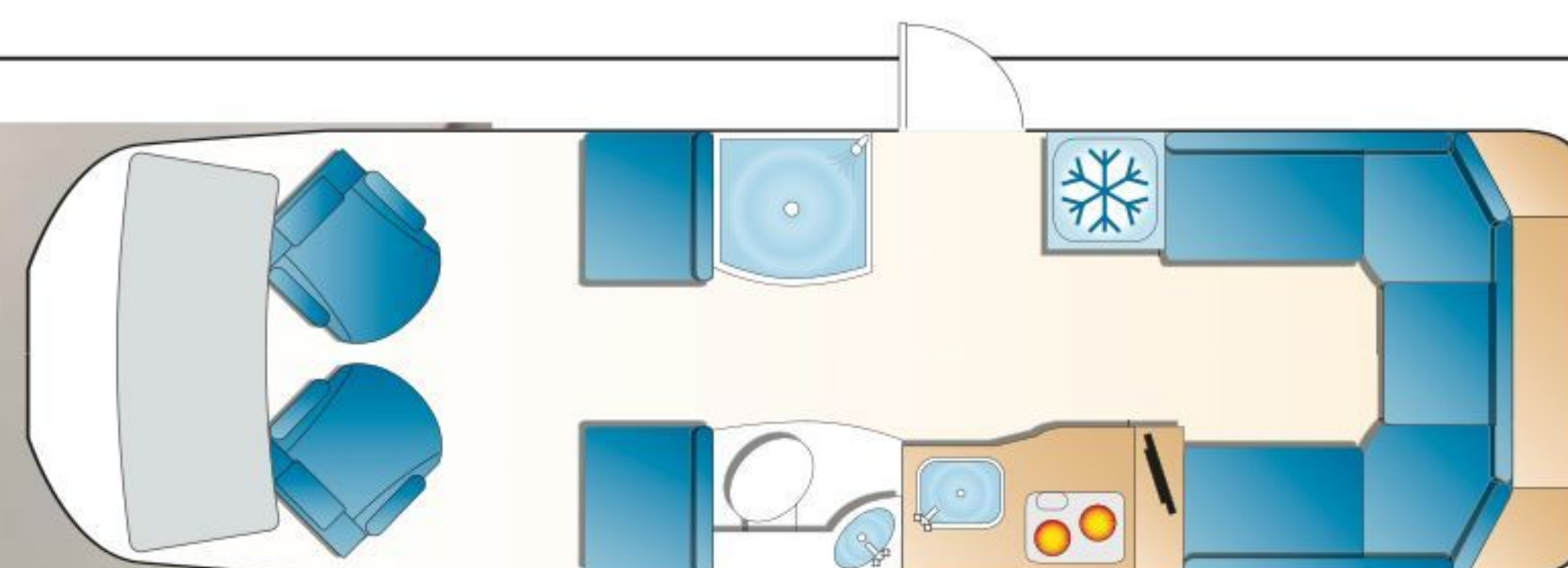
It's not long before you start to notice all the top-notch details throughout this 'van. The stylish net curtains and voiles, the provision of

USBs and mains sockets, the vast array of lighting (much of it dimmable), the soft trim on walls and ceiling and the superbly finished, double-stitched leather upholstery.

As you wander through the vehicle, you also notice another positive – the flat floor from cab to rear lounge. There's lots of use of white in the décor, in the kitchen area especially, and the Dune cabinetwork also helps with the bright, spacious feel. There are backlit details everywhere, too, from kitchen drawer fronts to ceiling panels and around the coat hanging area in the doorway. You won't ever feel claustrophobic in this 'van.

In the centre of the layout, the galley impresses



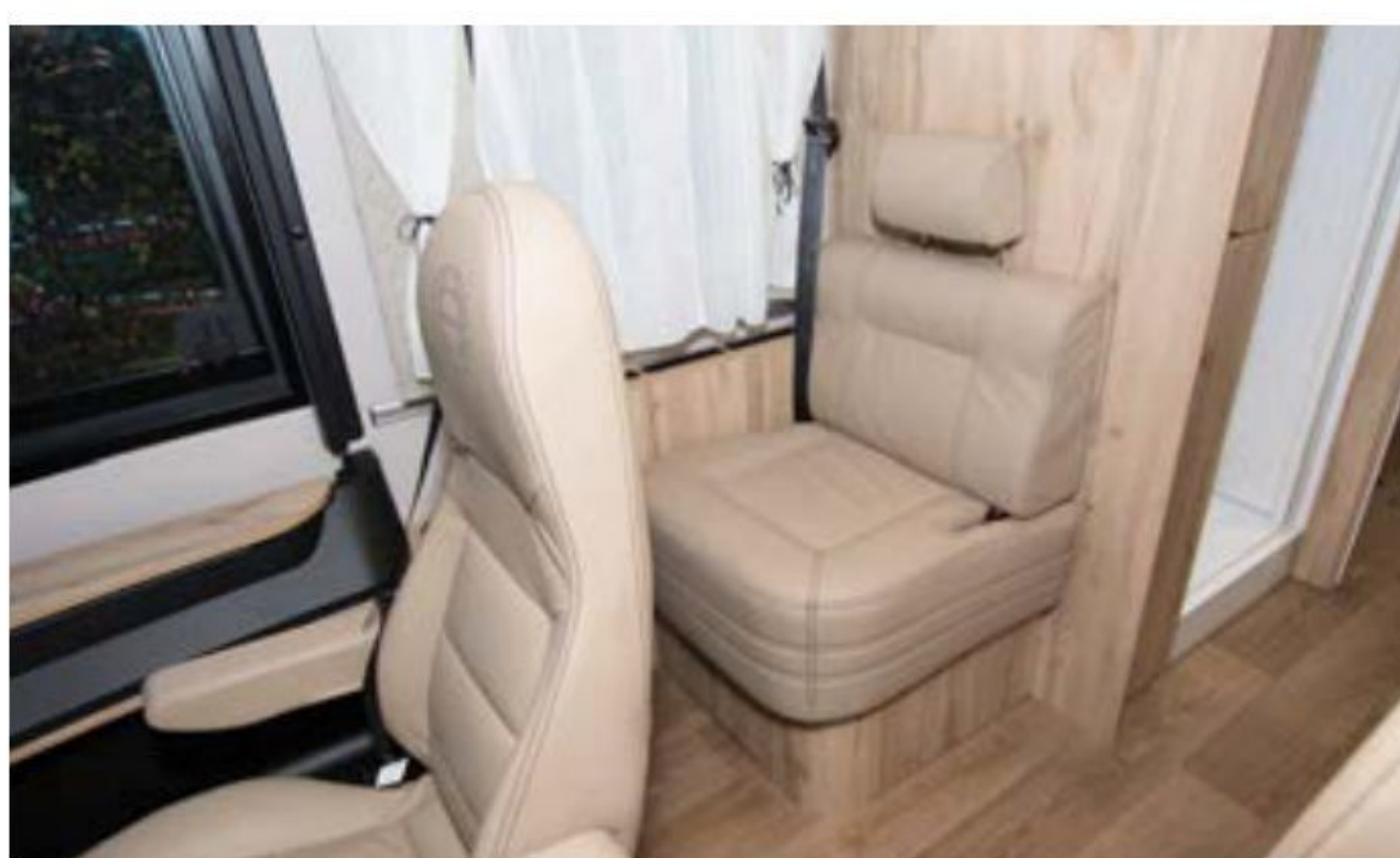


WHO IS LE VOYAGEUR?



Le Voyageur was born as an A-class motorhome brand in 1981. It soon became famous for its prestigious vehicles with bespoke design touches and Mercedes chassis, as well as having a look of its own. Then, in 2000, it became part of the Pilote Group and, two years later, it opened a brand-new factory near Angers in the Loire region.

Today, the company offers Classic (on Fiat) and Signature (on Iveco) ranges of A-class motorhomes, as well as its flagship Liner models with lengths from 8.30m to 10.80m and gross weights up to 12 tonnes (on Mercedes Atego chassis).



with its domestic-style cooker hood, its generous worktop and the neat sink lid that reverses to become a plate drying rack. But the real star here is the storage – and not just the quantity but the way it's arranged. You'll discover an array of slide-out sections, from a large cutlery drawer to a huge pull-out compartment that incorporates two bins and a rack for eight bottles. There's a deep drawer for all your pans and a further slide-out rack for a quartet of wine bottles, as well as one for tins, and most of these drawers are locked for travel by a single key (a buzzer sounds if you forget it and drive off).

And don't be put off by the photos here that show a two-burner hob – a three-ring cooker is

available, as is an oven or microwave.

The main bed is the drop-down one in the cab – a conventional transverse double as standard. The option you want, though, is called Duo Bed. This lowers electrically before extending rearwards to create a 2m-long bed in which you can sleep lengthways (easier for access without disturbing your better half).

The forward bedroom also gets its own en suite, with the toilet door closing off the whole front area. The toilet cubicle has backlit mirrors hiding plenty of practical storage and, opposite, there's another star feature – a super-sized shower with sensible central drain, shelf for gels, rail for your flannel and a large roof vent.

And we still haven't finished with all the great stuff in this motorhome. There are outside lockers for gas (larger 13kg cylinders) and batteries (upgradable to lithium), as well as storage in the full-width double floor. There's Alde heating, a built-in fresh water hose on a reel, an inboard waste water drain valve (where it won't freeze) and a facility to top up your fresh water (a whopping 200 litres) when you can't get close to a tap. And the mains lead is mounted on a reel, ready for use, too.

Asked to pick a star of last October's NEC show, I chose this Le Voyageur and longer experience of the model has only made me more convinced that it's a worthy winner here.



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www.levoyageur-motorhome.uk



Words Richard Dredge



Loan arrangers

We've previously looked at the key ways of financing a new or used motorhome; this month, we look at some less obvious alternatives

Not everyone is lucky enough to be able to afford to pay outright for a new motorhome – or even a decent used one. In recent issues we've taken a look at PCPs, loans and hire purchase, all of which are popular ways of paying to update your 'van, but there are other payment methods that might be worth considering. Here, we take a look at the three main ones, none of which may be a better option for you than taking out a loan – but, depending on your circumstances, any of these ways of borrowing money could be the financial lifeline that you need to secure your dream motorhome (which you'll probably have found in this month's issue!). As always, do plenty of research and ask lots of questions before signing anything, to make sure that you really can afford to borrow what you want.

CREDIT CARD

There aren't many circumstances in which it's cost-effective to use a credit card instead of a

conventional loan of some kind. Interest rates charged by credit card companies are normally prohibitively high as borrowing on a card is supposed to be a short-term debt. For example, a typical credit card might charge 17% APR, while a conventional loan provider may charge less than half that.

Assuming you need to borrow £25,000 for a motorhome, you're unlikely to be able to pay it off very quickly. If you can pay it off within a couple of years, it could be worth considering using a credit card as some companies offer 0% interest for up to two years on credit card purchases – but you must always make at least the minimum repayment and, if you don't clear the balance before the interest-free period ends, you will be charged interest.

Even if you can afford to buy that shiny 20-plate motorhome outright, it might be worth getting that free credit, then paying it all off in one go, so your savings could be made to work for you. Admittedly, that's not easy at the moment, with interest rates at

an all-time low but, once they start to climb above 0.1%, it's a tactic worth thinking about. There's also the problem of not being able to spend beyond your credit limit, which will almost certainly be somewhere a long way away from £25,000, so that's another reason why trying to buy a motorhome (or even part of one) on a credit card is likely to be a non-starter. But, if you just need that last few thousand pounds to be able to get the right motorhome for you and your family, this route could be worth a look.

It's important to check your eligibility before you apply for any type of credit, because a rejection could have a negative effect on your credit score. The best deals are reserved for those with the healthiest credit ratings. Applying for multiple credit cards at once can have a negative effect on your credit score, so it's best to wait to hear from your first-choice provider.

Once it has received your application, the provider will look at your credit report to assess the

credit risk you represent. If it likes what it sees, it is more likely to give you the credit card. If you're accepted, the provider will then tell you the credit limit it has given you, how long the 0% purchase period will be for, and the interest rate on purchases when it ends. This won't always be the same as what was advertised, as it factors in your income, as well as your credit report.

BANK OVERDRAFT

On the whole, bank or building society overdrafts tend to charge an interest rate far greater than that of a loan; some are currently charging as much as 40%, despite a Bank of England base rate of just 0.1%. However, you usually pay interest only for the days you are overdrawn. So, if you need additional money for just a few days each month, this approach may be an option – you just need to work out how much it's going to cost and whether or not this represents good value in comparison with the alternatives.

When deciding whether or not a bank overdraft is a viable option, you'll need to consider the interest rate charged by your bank and any annual or monthly fee charged for having an overdraft facility. Always arrange the overdraft with your bank in advance or you'll probably incur additional charges, and, before signing up, read the bank's terms and conditions in detail. Fail to do so and you could get stung for all sorts of charges; there's a good reason why banks sometimes have a reputation for not being fair...

RE-MORTGAGING

While a mortgage is the cheapest way of borrowing money over a long period, re-mortgaging to buy a motorhome may not be the best option. While it's



true that the loan is relatively cheap on the face of it, your repayments are typically spread over a long period (such as 15 years). So, while the repayments are affordable, they add up over time to the point that you'll end up paying more. Ultimately, it comes down to how quickly you can afford to pay back the loan, rather than how much you want to pay back in relation to what you borrow.

Let's assume you bought a property for £500,000 with a £450,000 mortgage 15 years ago. In that time, the amount you owe has fallen to £250,000, while the value of the property has increased to £800,000. As a result, the equity you own in the property has increased from £50,000 at the time of purchase to £550,000 now. This works out at a loan-to-value (LTV), or how the size of the loan compares to the value of the property, of 31%. That's a significant improvement from the 90% LTV you borrowed at initially. This is important as, the lower the LTV, the lower the interest rates mortgage lenders offer, meaning cheaper repayments.

Ideally, releasing cash by re-mortgaging is only something you should do if you have a significant amount of equity built up in your property, to the point that decreasing your equity will not dramatically change the loan-to-value of the

mortgage. Interest rates are typically priced in 5% bands of equity, becoming lower and lower the more equity you own. Lenders reserve their best deals for borrowers taking out mortgages at a lower loan-to-value, typically in the 60%-65% range. If the size of your mortgage increases when you release cash, from being around 60% loan-to-value to 75%, you will almost certainly have to pay a higher rate of interest.

The big positive of re-mortgaging is that it provides relatively cheap (or at least affordable) credit. But, you're increasing the size of your loan, so your monthly payments could increase. Also, house values can go down as well as up, so that equity you've built up could quickly be eroded away, potentially even leaving you in negative equity – which can make it extremely difficult to re-mortgage or move home in the future.

If you're not struck on the idea of re-mortgaging, there's always the option of taking out a current account mortgage. This is essentially an overdraft added onto the side of your mortgage, and it's one of the cheapest ways of borrowing money because the interest rates are relatively low. You can usually pay back the loan at the pace you want, but there is a caveat: lenders often assume you're spending the money on your house. If you're not, they need to know about it because they may be relying on you improving the very thing that the loan is secured upon – your home.



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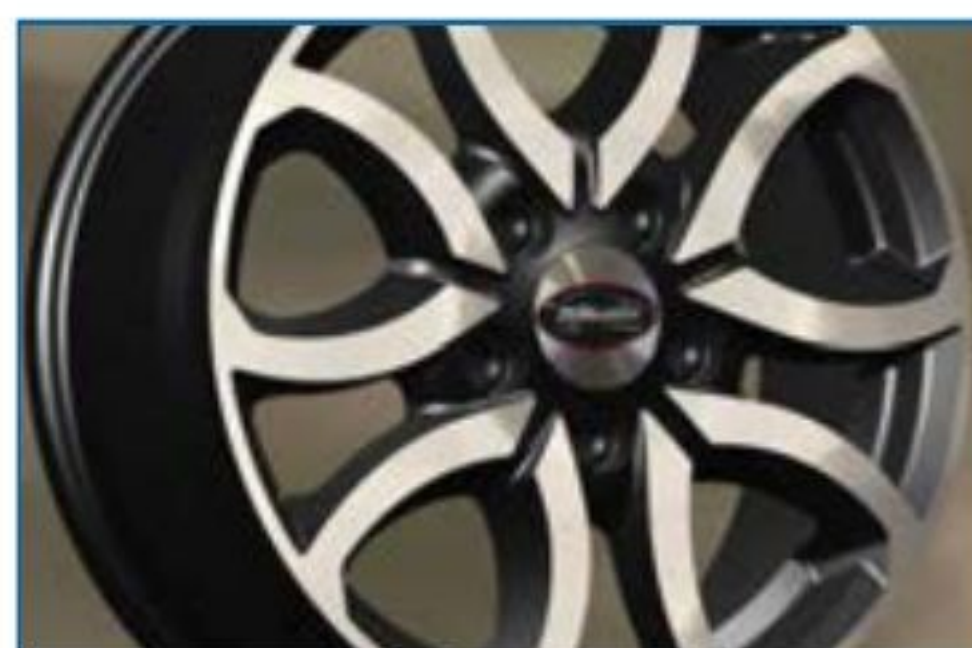
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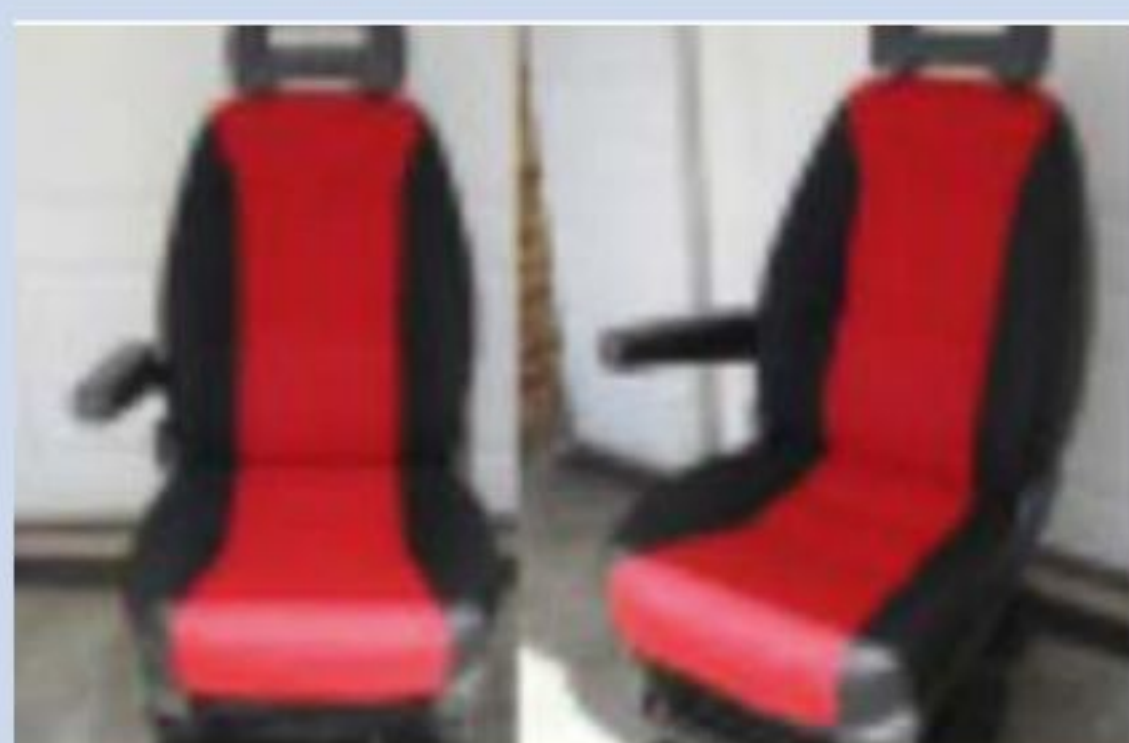


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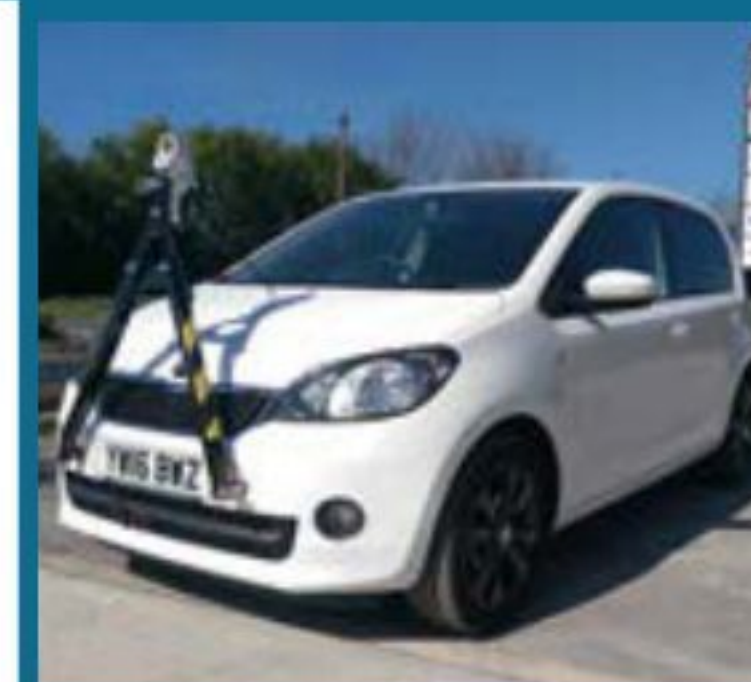


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